BORKELBY'S FOLLY

ISSUE NO. 3 Spring 1996

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Issue 3 of "Borkelby's Folly" is illustrated by Miles Teves (Jorune), Craig Smith (Tékumel) and a computer (Jorune map). A heartfelt thanks to them all.

EDITORIAL WARBLING OF THE DHAR CORONDON

PASS THE HAT

My apologies for this, but from issue 4 I'm afraid I have to charge for BF. Access to my usual cheap photo-copying has been cut off, meaning that I can no longer bear the costs. So, one issue will be £2.00/$4.00, while a three issue sub will set you back £5.00/$10.00, inclusive of postage. American readers are better sending cash, while Europeans can send cheques or readies. Contributors get a free copy of the issue in which their work appears, of course. I must stress that this will cover costs only, and any incidental profit will probably only be enough to buy some bubble gum. My very special thanks to those who sent me unsolicited monies anyway; I owe you one.

NEWS UPDATE

This editorial has had to be re-written due to the lapse between when the issue was finished (June) and when I got the time and money to get it printed (November); hence the cover optimistically states that this is the Spring 1996 issue, and the Tales from Tan Iricid section has been chopped and changed because it was way out of date. Gawd, it'll probably look awful.

Owen Smith has settled on rates for European subscriptions to Sholari: UK subscriptions are £9 for 3 issues, European (including the Republic of Ireland) are £10 for 3 issues. This is using First Class postage in the UK and Air Mail into Europe. Payment must be in UK pounds, for which Owen will accept personal cheques or postal orders (made out to "Owen Smith"). From outside the UK Eurocheques or International Money Orders are fine.

WHITE WOLF SEGMENTS

White Wolf and Steve Wieck granted me permission to reprint material from the out-of-print Segment Jorune series. Legally that permission lapsed a few months ago, but I'm glad to say that Andrew Leker has also kindly given permission as well. As far as I know I'm now fully covered. There's plenty of good stuff in there, including background material, scenarios, fiction, and introductory articles. I realise that some readers will have seen these already, but enough people exist who do not have copies to make some reprints worthwhile. The first such reprint is in this issue, and I expect to add at least one every time. And I hope the map I used from Alien Logic is OK, not that I have anything worth suing over.

ARTWORK

Yeah, there's not enough of original art in this issue, which is a common problem with fanzines. My own attempts at Joruni art were not commented on by anyone, so I guess I can assume that it was, er, adequate. Any scribblings of a Joruni nature would be much appreciated. Holiday snaps of topless Tunisian women would also be welcomed, though I probably couldn't use them in the zine (Julia officially protests at this rather feeble and sexist joke).

SPECIAL THANKS TO...

ANDREW LEKER, Stephan Wieck, Julia Oatham, Dave Morris, Paul Mason, Owen Smith, Matthew Pook, Bob Dushay, Hubert Bartels, Alex Blair, Soren Petersen.

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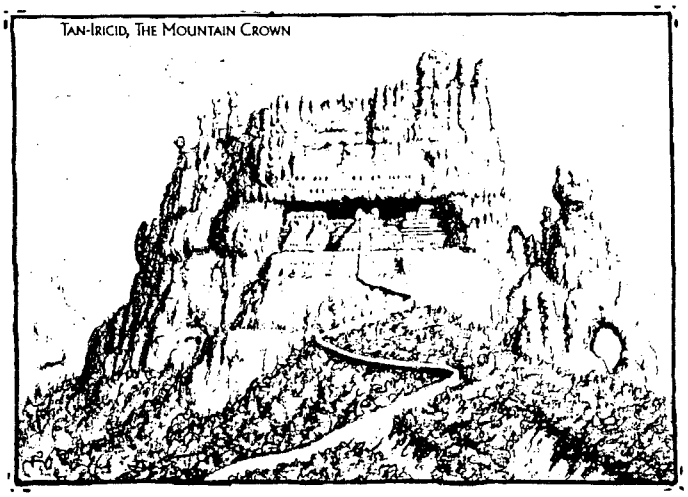
TALES FROM TAN IRICID



This issue's news section is given over to information about Joe Coleman's fanzine "Sholari" and an unofficial piece about the future timeline of Jorune. Sandwhiched between them is some updated info about Jorune on the net and details of how to contact Owen Smith about Sholari subscriptions.

Sholari

Joe says: "Sholari 4 is in layout, three pieces of art are missing and I may need to let them go. Sholari 4 grew so much I've axed part of it and turned it into Sholari 5. I'm starting to restructure Sholari, and it will show in #4 to give a fair shake to specific land development (Team Heridoth has the stage so far, but Thantier, Khodre, and Lusail are in the wings), game mechanic alternatives (translations to other systems, alternative explanations of things like isho, occupations, cool Jorune toys, etc) and what I call "unnecessary loving detail" where people write essays detailing certain aspects of Jorune life. This last feature has been there from the start, but I want to codify it into those wonderful, meaty observations that keep the flavour of the world.

I intend to downplay the Earth-tec connection, with the exception of bio-tec/recos and such. It will still exist, but my focus is on the Jorune that is experienced by the vast majority of beings on the planet. It is a rich world and we could go years without ever seeing a blaster or the Dharsage's starcraft. Earth-tec is a good subject for a supplement, but gives false colour to the game.

I intend to expand information for the option of playing any races *except* cleash, thriddle, and shantha. Yes, you can play a grumpy dumb croid if you want to - it isn't MY kind of PC, but the game isn't limited to my ideas. Cleash, thriddle, and shantha have access to way too much secret information, and opening them as PCs could destroy balance in scenarios and remove much of the mystery of the world. There *may* be a provision for 'forest thriddle', Tan-Iricid's hillbilly cousins, but that could be a long way off.

An understanding of isho seems to be the key to the game, and clarification in terms of game play will be a goal in the Sholari coverage. Look for the start of this around #5.

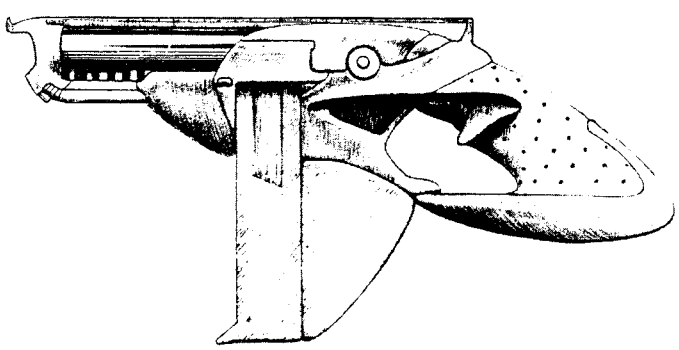
I will not be going back to the photocopy shop to make more copies of 1, 2, and 3 after this last batch - there were another dozen done of all three to satisfy a few sudden orders after I was out, but beyond that I'm not going to do it again. There are typos and mistakes in the original computer files for #1 and #2, so they would need to be rekeyed.

We will shortly be announcing our European agent [Owen Smith, see below]. I will handle the US, Canada, and the Pacific region, and for Europe you will subscribe through the new agent - he will have a few back issues from this current bunch, and he will handle the posting of Sholari for his side of the Atlantic.

I will be refining the Jorune Web page, and setting up a new page for the fanzines - BF, SK, and Sholari. This may include an archive of articles for ftp, but that needs to be worked out with the authors and editors. Maybe some graphics.

Many thanks to the people on this list who have kept me aware that I am not the only one who has the love of the world and an idea how it should go. Specifically, thanks to Owen, who has been the most consistent cheerleader of the bunch and who has contributed most to getting me off my butt to do the work I have committed to do - get a life Owen :-).

Thanks all."



Jorune Mailing List
In reference to all the mailing list stuff, last issue's net listings were incorrect. They should be:

ftp.csua.berkeley.edu
catalina.opt-sci.arizona.edu

In both cases the files are in /pub/Jorune. Owen says "The berkeley site may in theory be the primary one but in fact catalina gives better service so we tend to use that one. It has more files too.

When subscribing to the Jorune mailing list you need a space between SUBSCRIBE and your e-mail address. Also you can only subscribe from the sending address anyway, so you can leave it out. The subject is unimportant. I suggest:

To: jorune-l-request@io.com
Subject: Subscription
Subscribe
end

Leave no blank lines, and put the 'end' on to make sure any trailers the mailer puts on are ignored."

Should UK and European readers want to contact Owen to arrange a Sholari subscription, they can do so at:

Owen Smith
59 The Oaks
Milton
Cambridge
CB4 6ZG

e-mail at: Owen.Smith@net-tel.co.uk

Jorune Timeline

Note: this is purely unofficial material. As I understand the current situation of Jorune publishing, there will be no 4th edition of the game in the near future, Chessex have allowed their licence to lapse and things are up in the air.

For thousands of years the thriddle have held Tan-Iricid, a fully equipped Lamorri administration facility. They have defended it against shantha, Thantierian, Maustin Caji, and Burdothian attempts to take over the island. Some were overt, some were covert, but the last hundred years have been particularly difficult for the thriddle.

Two thousand years ago, the cleash learned to crack white crystal to open warps. It is the 'holy grail' for the cleash to find a warp into Tan-Iricid, where they can reach the Lamorri transmission equipment. Thriddle do *not* map warps because they think it is a neat thing to do on a slow saturday night; across the face of Jorune there are hundreds of warp sites where a lone thriddle waits with a pile of white crystal. These warp sites lead to Tan-Iricid and whenever possible thriddle encourage non-cleash/non-ramian races to settles and obscure these sites. In the wilderness the thriddle sentinels wait. Sometimes they are found and all that is left is a burn spot where the crystals have exploded - and two eye stalks crossed one over the other.

In the early part of the next century, the cleash will get onto Tan-Iricid and activate a Lamorri rescue beacon. Shortly after this will come the time of the Grand Alignment (seven moons, and every coastal nation will be too concerned with their own damaged cities to care much about the thriddle). A few years after the Grand Alignment, while the planet is recovering, the new Lamorri fleet will arrive and the face of Jorune will change forever...it becomes a very different game. We are now experiencing the Golden Age of Jorune, and there is only one more generation before the war begins.

Someone else has heard the plea for help: the ships from the survivors of the Terran destruction arrive - High Colonists, Luna, and Mars. I think they lost warp technology which brought them to Jorune and finding it will be like finding the Land of Green Ginger, Shamballa, or the Garden of Eden - legend made flesh.

The thivin are descended from the ramian and most will side with shantha against the Lamorri. The Red Shantha has returned from the keeper rod in which he rested for 5,000 years and will organise the defences of Jorune - shantha, thriddle, muadra, iscin races, and those who are now 'of Jorune'.

What role will the ramian play? And how will the cleash survive a united Joruni front against the betrayers of the world? And the individual nations - who will betray Jorune, who will betray Earth, who will join the shantha...and who will play the factions against each other?

Enjoy the Jorune we have while you can, brothers and sisters - the Golden Age will end when the seven moons align.

HELPING THE GAME MASTER PLUNGE PLAYERS INTO JORUNE

by SkyRealms Publishing

This article originally appeared in White Wolf #14 and is reprinted with full permission.

While many GMs have heard of Jorune and have seen the artwork, they are often satisfied with their current system, desiring only the atmosphere of an alien place for their players to explore. Jorune is a perfect setting for players who have spent one too many days in a dark dungeon, or who have counted more dragon kills than they have gold pieces. Even the galactic gaming types will find themselves befuddled by exotic creatures and cultures more alien than they've seen in one hundred worlds. And whether your players are in a science-fiction, a fantasy, or a real-world game, there's a way to Jorune for everybody.

HOW TO GET TO JORUNE (KIDNAPPING YOUR PLAYERS)

There are a number of interesting ways to bring your players to Jorune. Players in a science-fiction universe could travel to Jorune, an as of yet uncharted world, on orders from superiors to investigate the disappearance of ships in the Stynferrough IV star system. Or they could come across this lush world accidentally, and face the fate of many ships...

Travel By Spaceship

Although not generally disclosed to Jorune gamers, Jorune's shanthic automatic defence systems are standing ready at full power. Although more detailed information is pending, the system's sensors are usually sensitive only to ships with cross-sections larger than 0.01 km^2 (roughly 100x100 meters). The devastating power of the planet's Elip-Ston weapons grid has blasted all but the most powerfully shielded starcraft out of the skies. Jorune's natives have been historically xenophobic dating back more than 5,000 years. Historians of Jorune chronicle several turbulent periods of subject rule under star-faring races, all of which were terminated. A defence system was created to allay their fears of another term of repression.

A smaller ship approaching orbit might trigger a less catastrophic response should only a single, low-power ground based tracer-cannon (called a "thosk") be activated and merely track it. The thosk's continuous beam will begin overloading field-coupled circuits within seconds, and the shields of a small ship will start to give way within minutes. This is the perfect time for a hasty crash landing on Jorune. Locations for landings and crash landings are described later.

If your players do much flying from one side of the galaxy to another, you can innocently introduce a defect into their hyperspace transducer that pulls them back to space/time short of their destination. They can then land or crash land on Jorune for supplies and time to effect repairs.

Still another way to bring players to Jorune is through the collapse or fluctuation in the space conduit through which the players travel in hyperspace. Jorune, her moons, and neighbouring planets in the solar system all produce a powerful field that can deflect or change the local space conduit. Weary travellers have come out of hyperspace to find themselves hundreds of light years from home, low on fuel, near the orbit of a seemingly hospitable, temperate planet, with life sustaining atmosphere and near-standard gravity. Many decide to enter orbit, make some sightings, and land.

Of course, if you really want to baffle your players, you can bring them out of suspended animation on Jorune as backup personnel that were never revived after the shanthic assault of the humans. Players will be waking up in Earth's 58th century. They will know little about this world, having been put in the deep freeze before leaving Earth. Their knowledge will be limited to the expectations of the colony leaders - and would be practically useless when faced with a reality so different.

Enter Jorune From a Planetbound Setting By Warp

There are other ways to enter Jorune besides through space. Players in a medieval setting, perhaps romping through a dungeon, or characters playing mobsters in the 1920s on Earth can come to Jorune in a less sophisticated way...by warp.

Warps are commonplace on Jorune, but not so in most other places in the Galaxy. A warp looks like a window four meters high and two

and a half meters across. The view through a warp gives a somewhat distorted view of the location that the warp leads to. Players can see where the warp leads unless it is a 'dark warp'. The properties of a dark warp differ in that nothing can be seen through them, and they exert a powerful attraction to all nearby matter. The strength of the pull drops off quickly with the distance from the warp. One step too close and your dungeon-digging player will be kissing the sweet soil of an alien world.

Warps can occur spontaneously on Jorune, but are a rarity, if at all existent on other worlds. Generally, a Jorune crystal or other object containing "Isho" in needed to open the dimensional manifold. The coincidentally properly proportional shape of a building on Earth near certain radioactive wastes could trigger the effect, just as surely as the activation of a large white crystal brought from Jorune. Crystals are activated by holding them in the palm of the hand and concentrating on thoughts that force the mind to produce the correct type of standing waves that the crystal needs to release its energy. If successful, an orb of white energy will be released from the palms of the crystal user and flow 2-3 meters away, where it will form into a warp.

The period of time that a warp remains open depends on the energy source, its natural stability, and interference from other parties. On Jorune, the natives have become very good at slamming warps shut within seconds if they don't like who's coming through. The "shanthas", the natives previously mentioned, can also create warps with ease. When players need to return home, it may be a shantha they seek out to open a warp back to their homeworld.

If undisturbed, a warp opened with a Jorune crystal will close within 20 seconds. Naturally occurring warps, those spontaneous in nature, usually last no more than one hour, but will re-open again at a later date. Shanthas understand this process.

WHERE TO LAND/WHERE TO WARP

The planet Jorune is roughly Earth sized and contains land masses and water in comparable proportions to Earth. Only one half of the globe is mapped by SkyRealms Publications, leaving the other side of the world to the imagination of the game's Sholari (a Jorune GM). The following is a brief description of each of the major continents and land masses.

Ice Fields of Gilthaw: This large, frozen wasteland is home to the "Cleash", an insect-like race of intelligent bipedal creatures that travel the world in their K'criss ships, large, narrow water going vessels with masts that sway overhead twice the ships length in height. They are feared and despised by most of the other cultures on Jorune for their relentless aggression against other races. The Cleash dominate and enslave a related race, the Scarmis, by some biological means not fully understood. Scarmis will do the bidding of cleash only when in their company. The Cleash themselves are not well suited to the frozen wastelands in which they live, and for millennia scholars have searched for clues that explain their existence so far north.

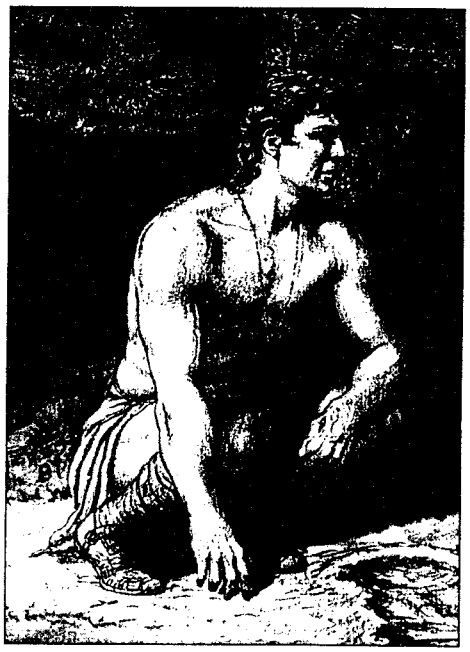
Voligire: A hot, volcanically active land mass seething with black bogs, swamps, and dead lakes. A race of slender bipeds called "Ramian" live in Voligire. Although not despised like the cleash, their warring passions have brought them into conflict with most of the other realms of Jorune. The last major war was in 3472, only 24 years ago. The savagely attacked Burdoth's north coast and destroyed the entire Lelligirian Navy and 3600 seamen in the process. Ramian scour the globe in search of "shirm-eh", an herb that they require in order to heal from injury. They attempt to trade the coveted daij-meat with humans for shirm-eh. Only the isholess ramian can safely fish for these dangerous enervores. Ships manned by humans run the peril of being sunk by daij, fishing for these Jorune sea-devils. Daij is used in human realms to sense illegal energy use.

Lundere: This is the home of the Woffen, genetically engineered creatures based on terran wolves that now stand upright, and are endowed with speech and opposable thumbs. Although they walk on two legs, they can drop down to all fours for speed. Woffen were the product of "Iscin", the terran bio-tec engineer who created a number of Earth descendant creatures soon after the fall of the colonies.

Lundere is also the home of the ancient shanthic land. Shanthas are the original form of intelligent life on Jorune. They do not see with eyes; their "Tra-sense" allows them to see all around them and without light. Jorune's ambient form of energy, the "Isho", permeates and deflects around life and matter. This is what the shanthas see. Humans can gain this sense through digestion of daij meat, described elsewhere. Shanthas were apprehensive about allowing humans to visit their world 3500 years ago, but greeted the visitors with luke-warm welcome and the foundation of their laws. When Earth found itself in the throes of nuclear war, the Jorune colony knew that they were cut off and that it was only a matter of time before their supplies dwindled. The humans broke their negotiated treaties with the shanthas and found themselves in a genocidal confrontation with this planet's inhabitants. Most of the humans scattered throughout the 80 colony sites perished, as did millions of shanthas. Only now, 3500 years later, have populations regained previous numbers. Shanthas still occupy Lundere, but their locations are hidden and their contact with outsiders limited.

Dobre: Close cousins of the Woffen are the Bronth, another genetic creation of Iscin, in this case based upon Earth's bears. They stand as high as eight feet and can weigh in excess of one-thousand pounds. Like their smaller relatives, the woffen, they are bipedal, although they go down on all fours when relaxing or playing with their cubs. Bronth abhor slavery since their early days after Iscin's death when still another bio-tec race, the "Crugar", dominated its cousin races and forced them to do its bidding.

Burdoth: Unquestionably the best place for a human or near-human to reside on Jorune. The realm was home to many of the original colony sites 3500 years ago. Humans have made the most progress toward civilisation in Burdoth, where many large cities dominate the coastline. The capitol of Burdoth, "Ardoth", is home to more than half a million beings. The army of this realm has shown superiority in all of its engagements since the rediscovery of energy weapons fifty years ago, in a conflict remembered as the Energy Weapons War. Lost caches of Earth-tec, perfectly preserved underground for millennia, were discovered by Burdoth's military and the new technology has revolutionised both combat and society on Jorune. The tools and weapons of humans' ancestors has for the first time in 35 centuries been again in the hands of humans. Only time will tell how wisely they have chosen to use this awesome arsenal.



Human society in Burdoth relies heavily upon the "Drenn System", in which people eager to become citizens of Burdoth complete tasks, missions, or assigned duties to show loyalty and devotion to the realm. A "challisk", or metallic plate is worn around the neck and serves to record marks from Drenn who view their deeds as worthy. A person seeking Drenn status is called a "Tauther".

Ardoth is the technological centre of Jorune. Aside from black markets locations on the island of Sillipus and the realm of Thantier, Ardoth inventories the greatest selection of goods. Many Earth-tec devices are strictly controlled and may only be carried by Drenn.

Other Areas: West of Burdoth is the Dobenal, a vast wasteland filled with tribespeople, travellers, marauders and wanderers. To the east lies the realm of Heridoth, a once great realm, now fallen from power and prestige into a nation of warring city-states and factional powers. To the south are the East Trinnu Jungle Lands, a dangerous area separating

Burdoth and the more southern realm of Anasan. The East Trinnus, as they are called, have been infested with cleash for the past 30 years. Burdoth has stepped up patrols in the area in anticipation of attack.

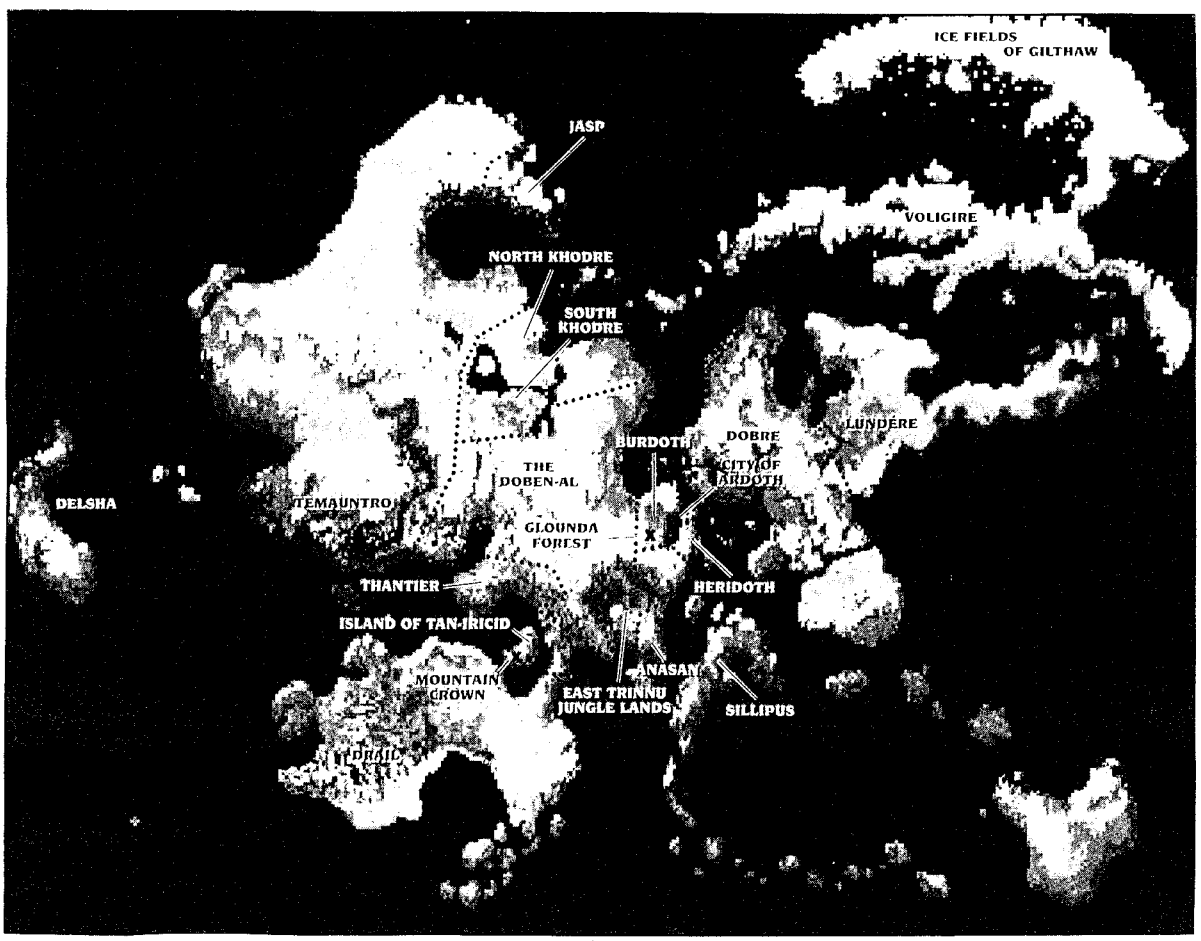
Living on Jorune, Born in Kansas

Now that some of the Geography is clear, go wild. Plant your players where you will. Burdoth is the tamest part of the world. Although interaction with other humans is the most accessible, player characters from different worlds and game systems will seem the most odd to those they are closest related to. A human from Ardoth would immediately note the weird clothing that a human from a medieval society might wear: "From what beast are those leather's made? Not thombo! And from what wood is that staff? There are no trees in Burdoth that grow that grain." Creatures would definitely comment on a characters accent (assuming that the referee desires such a complication). The "Entren" spoken on Jorune is close to English, but many words have changed their meanings with time. Peoples of Jorune are likely to assume the speaker refers to corondon and gemlinks, though he is weaving yarns about dragons and gold pieces..

Living On Jorune, Born on Altair VII

Those entering Jorune from a science-fiction setting are more likely to run into trouble in the human populated areas of Burdoth and Heridoth. Because Earth-tec weapons are strictly controlled, any blaster toting stranger is likely to be brought in for interrogation. Burdoth's ruling power, the Dharsage, is well armed and ready for any show of force. Those marooned on Jorune are more likely to survive by turning over confiscated weapons and their alien devices and adapting to the world than by fighting it. If they stay for a year or more, they'll adjust over time, and become powerful in their own right.

It may be that the biggest unexpected surprise for characters from advanced societies is the presences of the Isho, and the amazing ways that the natives and immigrants have learned to manipulate it. The shanthas evolved around the Isho: they see with it, communicate through it, and weaves it into various forms, some destructive, some powerfully beneficial. This is not a form of psionics. The energy abilities, called dyshas, are not powers of the mind, rather they are skills that the mind learns to manipulate the energy that is already there. Although Isho is not unlimited in any area of Jorune, shanthas have learned and physically adapted to draw it in from sources near and far when needed. They read the Isho winds and can follow the currents to large sinks in the crust of the mantle from which the Isho cycles.



Summary of Terms

Ardoth: Capitol city of the realm of Burdoth. Humans greatest stronghold on Jorune.

Bronth: A race of creatures based on Earth bears that speak, stand upright, and have opposable thumbs.

Blaster: A high-speed plasma ejecting energy weapon.

Burdoth: The main human realm of Jorune. Many of the Earth colony ships were based in the lands now referred to as Burdoth.

Challisk: A metal plate worn around the neck of anyone seeking citizenship in the realm of Burdoth. Challisks are made from the remains of hull plates from the original Earth colony ships that were blown apart during the shanthic assaults.

Cleash: A race of warring insect-like creatures that live far to the north in Gilthaw, and in the East Trinnus.

Corondons: Enourmous beasts that inspire terror among all races except Jorune's natives, the shanthas. Corondons have four arms boasting three razor-sharp nails more lethal than swords. The shanthas have mastered the process of crafting blades from these "thaliers".

Crugar: A race of bio-engineered creatures based on Earth's cougars. Created by Iscin, the crugar eventually caused his death.

Crystal: Jorune crystals absorb some of the planet's ambient energy, the "Isho", over time. White crystals are capable of creating warps.

Daij: A marine enervore (energy eating creature) that is valued for endowing "Tra-sense" on those who eat its meat. Daij are very dangerous prey because they attempt to sink all ships but the isholess (and thus invisible) Ramian.

Dark Warp: A warp through which no light can pass through to give a clue as to what lies on the other side. Dark warps exert a strong attractive pull.

Dharsage: The ruling class in Burdoth or the ruler of a realm.

Dobre: A realm to the east of Burdoth inhabited by Bronth.

Durlig: A plant created by Iscin, the bio-tec engineer. Although its flavour was far from perfect at the time of the colony's destruction, durlig was created as the mainstay of the human diet on Jorune. It went uncultivated for centuries because early humans considered it a foul-tasting, poisonous weed.

Drenn: Citizens of Burdoth. Only Drenn may carry energy weapons.

Drenn System: The system by which Tauther seek work and journeys to prove themselves worthy of citizenship. Tauther wear challisks from their necks upon which marks of approval are recorded.

Dyshas: Energy abilities are called "dyshas". The fall into two main categories: orbs and bolts. Dyshas are woven out of Isho.

Earth-tec: Any device or item from ancient Earth. Thirty-five centuries have passed since the colony arrived on Jorune, but Earth-tec preserved in underground cryogenic support tanks are fully operational when taken out of suspension.

Gemlinks: The basic unit of currency in Burdoth. Gemlinks are, as there name implies, small round gems that are linked together like bracelets.

Heridoth: Human realm located south-east of Burdoth.

Ice Fields of Gilthaw: Frozen fields that are the inhospitable home to the even more inhospitable cleash.

Iscin: The bio-tec scientist who created Woffen, Bronth, Crugar, Blount, and Tologra. A person of learned ability - a scientist or scholar - is called an "iscin".

Isho: The ambient energy of Jorune which permeates and deforms around everything on Jorune.

Jorune: Colonised by Earth in the 22nd century, AD. After Earth's demise the colony was abandoned to an uncertain future on an alien world. Jorune is more than one-hundred light years away from Earth.

Lundere: Ancient shanthic lands and home of the Woffen.

Ramian: Tall, slender, exoskeletal creatures who inhabit Voligire.

Scarmis: Insect-like creatures that are dominated by the Cleash.

Shanthas: The original form of intelligent life on Jorune. They have no eyes, instead seeing with Tra-sense, which allows them to interpret how the isho deforms around matter. Shanthas evolved underground, where there large cities still remain.

Shirm-eh: A limilate (herb) which is necessary for ramian to heal.

Tauther: One who seeks citizenship in Burdoth is a Tauther. The process of seeking citizenship is called "tothis".

Thantier: Realm of pure-humans far to the west of Burdoth.

Thombo: Enormous beasts of burden used for riding and harvest of durlig.

Thosk: A low-power ground based tracer-cannon used to track starcraft in their approach and orbit of Jorune. Thosk are also used against ground targets.

Tra-Sense: The way shanthas "see". Isho flows around around objects and creatures, and all matter on Jorune has a distinctive Isho density.

Warp: Large window-like areas that temporarily allow passage from one place to another.

Woffen: A bio-tec race based upon Earth wolves.

DÆDAL VISIONS
A comparative review of Tékumel and Jorune
by Paul Mason

Note: This article originally appeared in issue 20 of Paul's fanzine "Imazine" (1988, I think) since which time the publishing history of both games has changed. Jorune has moved on to a 3rd edition (£15.50) and Tékumel is now officially packaged as Gardasiyál (£32.65), though this contains no background information and has been decried by the UK Tékumel community. The Different Worlds editions of Swords and Glory (1 & 2) are still available for the more than reasonable price of £8.65 each. Despite being slightly outdated I have left Paul's text completely alone, except for a small section at the end which discussed the (then) future state of Tékumel publications. Once you've read this - which still has relevance and raises some interesting issues - switch over to my rebuttal piece, which will address some of Paul's points regarding Jorune. My thanks to Paul for granting permission to reprint.

daedal [L. *daedalus*, Gr. *daidalos*], a. mazy, intricate; wonderfully wrought; skilful; deceitful; complicated.

vision [F., from L. *visionem*], n. a mental representation of a visual object, esp in a dream or trance; a supernatural or prophetic apparition; a creation of the imagination or fancy.

These are two games in the same category. They stand out from other games at quite a distance. Each is science-fantasy; each is an imaginative gameworld; each has a cult following. The differences between them are interesting and revealing. The comparison which follows is not based on all the products for the games. I own the Different Worlds EPT rules, have the Swords and Glory sourcebook to hand, and have looked at Swords and Glory Player's Book, the Book of Ebon Bindings, Deeds of the Ever Glorious, and the Tsolyáni Language. I also own the Jorune game and have looked at a couple of the supplements. I think I've seen enough to compare the two games in physical and mechanical terms. My impressions of their atmospheres and depth are coloured by what I have seen, and the limited experience I've had of playing them, but then I've had more experience of both than most reviewers presented with a brand new product.

THE SETTING

Reading the early histories of Tékumel and Jorune, I was struck by the extraordinary similarity. Both are set on a distant planet, colonised by a space-faring human race. The humans encountered indigenous life on the planet and other space faring races too. Then there was a catastrophe. Civilisation collapsed. The humans lost their technology but began to use magic as they crawled slowly back toward civilised society. As the game starts the origins of humans on Tékumel and Jorune are shrouded in the mists of pre-history.

Priest of Karakán and a Pé Choi speaking with officers of the Palace Guard. From Empire of the Petal Throne.

Tékumel was conceived by Professor Barker long before there were any rolegames. When D&D arrived, a game version of Tékumel followed hard on its heels. Tékumel has been a fixture in the rolegames market for thirteen years, albeit as a cult. So it is rather suspicious to find that the younger game, Jorune, has such a similar basis. Admittedly I haven't yet gone into the differences, but it's a niggling worry.

Talking of the differences, here are a couple. When the humans arrived on Tékumel, they were immediately hostile to the indigenous life forms, the Ssú and their aquatic cousins, the Hlüss. No communication could take place between the races as their modes of thought were too dissimilar. On Jorune the humans rapidly became able to communicate with the humanoid shanthas, and lived in peace with them prior to the catastrophe, at which point they came into conflict over resources. The Tékumel catastrophe was the rather improbable slipping of the entire Tékumel solar system through a warp in space, into a starless void. The Jorune disaster was slight by comparison - the cessation of supply ship visits because of Total War erupting on Earth.

After the early history matters differ further. On Jorune, civilisation collapsed, then started again until we're now 3500 years on. Not an awful lot to go on there... Tékumel goes into a little more detail. The area in which most games are set (referred to as the Five Empires) has a history stretching back 25,000 years, and there's no unambiguous information as to how long ago the Time of Darkness occurred. The intervening time has seen mighty empires rise and fall, and these are chronicled in the game. The feeling conveyed is of a world with a history as rich as our own, a world in which civilisation has waxed, waned, and changed its nature. As the game begins the dominant empire is that of Tsolyánu, now threatened by war. Baron Ald, the dynamic ruler of Yán Kór, has several scores to settle with the Empire of the Petal Throne, as Tsolyánu is called. On the western borders of Tsolyánu, the rulers of Mu'ugalavyá watch with interest, hoping for an opportunity to regain land lost to Tsolyánu in the last war. The Empires of Salarvyá and Livyánu also have a stake in the outcome of the war, and their agents are no less active than those of Tsolyánu and Yán Kór. Thus a game in Tékumel opens against a dramatic backdrop.

Jorune is strange in this respect. Although there is some political jostling going on, the designers chose to keep this hidden from the players, presenting them instead with a bland and peaceful picture of life. The Sholari (referee) is given secret information about the true state of affairs between the various realms. This seems to me a very clumsy way of handling matters. While it's obvious that player characters will not have an accurate grasp of political matters, they will inevitably pick up a host of rumours and murmurings. In Tékumel this is simulated by giving the players ambiguous information about the situation.

Both games include futuristic technology, which performs a sort of 'magical artifact' rôle alongside the genuinely magical artifacts. The Tékumel technology is possibly a little too influenced by space opera, but the game's stress on the nature of society gives the clue as to how the technology should be viewed by the inhabitants: as Magic of the Ancients. Since the descriptions are non-specific and ambiguous it can also be reinterpreted to suit your own idea of its origins. Barker frequently comments that he encourages gamers to create their own Tékumel, a refreshing change from the paternalistic 'official' nonsense spouted by the likes of Gygax. Jorune is less distant from its technological past and so the devices are more precisely described. As they are also mainly drawn from lurid sci-fi, they might jar a little with players who like their fantasy to be fantasy, and their sci-fi to be sci-fi.

THE CREATURES

Both Jorune and Tékumel are full of weird and wonderful creatures. I'd say that on a superficial level the main appeal of the games lies in the variety of imaginative 'new monsters'. Certainly a large proportion of Empire of the Petal Throne is given over to brief descriptions of the creatures, and Jorune lavishes the majority of one of its three books (the Tauther Guide) on creatures, as well as plenty of the Sholari Guide. This is a little worrying, as it hints at the triumph of quantity over quality that AD&D in particular encourages. But both games make up for this to a large extent with the descriptions.

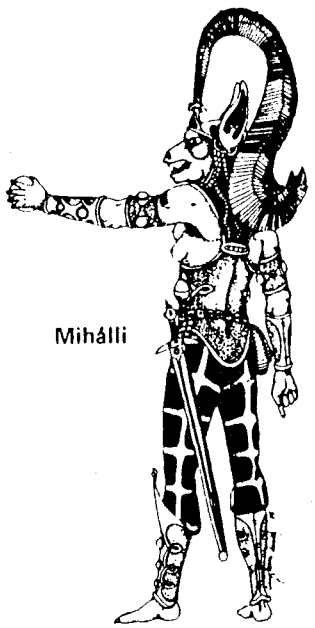
The impressive thing about the way the creatures of Jorune are described is that it is always from the point of view of a native of Jorune. Initially this is disorientating, but after a while it creates a more powerful identification. Although the Tékumel creatures don't get the same treatment, they do benefit from atmospheric descriptions. In both cases there is a pleasing lack of traditional, over-used types such as goblins and trolls. Both have quirks, the Jorune 'biologically engineered animal-men' grate a bit; and some of the Tékumel creatures look as if Barker was struggling to 'Tékumelise' monsters that Gary Gygax had insisted on including.

THE SOCIETY

Having praised Jorune for the 'internal' descriptions of its creatures, I must now criticise it for its description of society. Firstly, there is precious little in the basic game. And what there is seems somehow hollow. It's as if the designers put together society from the outside in - deciding what they wanted to present players with and then making the background up as required. Secondly, the descriptions of the society are frequently intermingled with rules. One discovers about the process of acquiring Drenn citizenship by reading the rules section on how a player character goes about getting the necessary copra. Elsewhere cultural notes are presented haphazardly, as single points out of context. It is, of course, possible that society is detailed in a more orderly and assimilable fashion in supplements. However, I have certain other reservations about Jorune society which I'll get onto in the next section. Tsolyáni society is described from the inside out. Unfortunately Empire of the Petal Throne skimps on the cultural details almost as much as does Jorune, but what there is feels like it is part of a workable whole. The Tékumel sourcebook gives full details about the society in a reasonably ordered fashion. Tsolyáni society is clan-based and highly stratified. Etiquette and proper behaviour are necessary to anyone who aspires further than the gutters of Jakálla. Tsolyáni religion is a complex beast, examining the religious consequences of a world in which the gods clearly exist in some form or another, though their 'true' form is either ungraspable by human minds, or deliberately shrouded in mystery. On Jorune the only religion is the rather sterile and obvious religion of the shanthas. The Jorune designers are apparently not much interested in religion in rolegames.

CHARACTER MOTIVATION

Another feature shared by these two games is the way in which they make the player characters part of society, and establish a reason why they should get involved in adventures. In D&D et al, the characters are just assumed to be heroes, who wander off and do heroic acts for no better reason than that the referee has planned this really neat scenario. In Jorune, player characters are Tauthers - people undergoing tothis in order to be accepted as Drenn (full citizens). Since tothis involves doing about fifty favours for existing Drenn in order to acquire the necessary copra on the character's challisk, the players are going to have a clear motivation for the first few sessions of the game (or, under a strict referee, for the whole game!).



Starting characters in Empire of the Petal Throne are assumed to be crass barbarians, newly arrived in the city port of Jakálla. Since life in the foreigner's quarter of the city is unpleasant, the characters must attempt to find a Tsolyáni citizen to employ them. Happily, such are the wiles and deceits of Tsolyáni society that bodyguards and agents are frequently required. The characters will spend their first few sessions learning about this new and complex society (just as their players will be doing) while performing tasks for their patron ranging from the mundane to the mind-blowing. If they perform adequately then they can reasonably expect to be granted citizenship of the Empire. Although much of the original game's stress lay on the Underworld (a rather more atmospheric location than the D&D dungeon) the table given of likely missions is

full of other interesting things for the starting characters to attempt. Strangely enough Jorune includes no such guidance. The nature of the favours which the Tauthers must do to gain copra are nowhere described in any length. The referee, sorry Sholari, must either go out and buy some supplemental gumpf, or use his/her noddle. Using your noddle isn't as easy as it sounds; the society detailed is so sketchy. 'Adventuring info' is the only stuff that's properly described, which is ironic since that's mostly what you don't need. I looked in vain for some clue as to how the society functioned - what the tensions and relationships were that made it work.

What I found struck me as superficial at best, naïve at worst. For example the tax collection system: 'Drenn are responsible for collecting "cletch" (taxation) from their neighbours. In Burdoth, the system is well liked - tax payers provide a friendly visit from a neighbour rather than that of an armed guard at cletch time.' This isn't telling me anything I want to know about taxation. Historically tax collectors have always been despised, so I find the Jorune arrangement suspicious. Do the Drenn let their 'neighbours' off some of the taxes in order to keep friendly? Do the 'neighbours' really get on so well with their cletch-collecting Drenn? I don't have the feeling that I'm seeing the internal workings of a living society. It feels artificial.

CLEASH TOTING FULL SPERRICS SACK

The same problem doesn't afflict Tékumel so badly. Partly this is because of the stress on dungeon adventures in the early version of the game. But it's also because the first few pages of the book are devoted to conveying a feel for the society in a relatively small amount of space. The principal seems to be that by showing how the Empire of the Petal Throne came to be, Barker enables you to understand *what* it came to be.

Another characteristic of Jorune which irritates is the way in which the designers seem afraid the players won't be motivated enough. It appears that the vast privileges obtained by Drenn aren't considered sufficient, so the designers have decided they have to dangle carrots of energy weapons - available only to Drenn. In the same breath the designers pontificate about a 'Somewhat productive, non-destructive mode' of play. The designers should decide whether their game is going to compromise and pander to the power gamers or not.

THE RULES

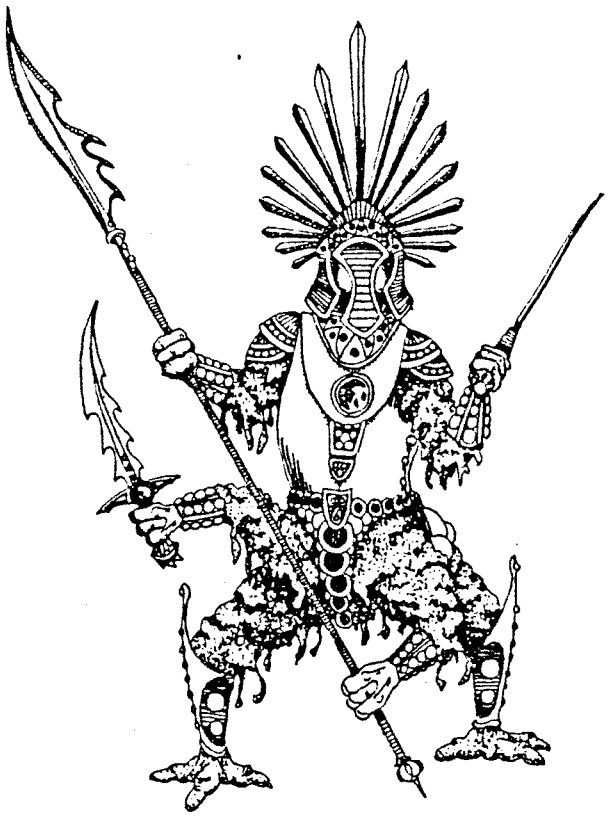
Here there is no comparison. Before I go on to describe the two systems I can state quite simply that Empire of the Petal Throne isn't in the same decade as Jorune. Only nostalgia freaks who grow misty-eyed at the recollection of those first three D&D books would want to play the EPT system unmodified. Jorune, on the other hand, comes over straight away as a system of the 1980s, and deserves to be examined and criticised accordingly. I'll start with Jorune.

Character generation is clean, with plenty of choice to shape your character by switching die roll results. The initial skill acquisition system is adequate for the task; characters spend Education points (derived from the Education characteristic) in order to acquire skill levels. When the game gets going, Education points are obtained through actions that would improve skills, rather than just for successful use. Different skills have different difficulties, ie. costs in Education points to go up one level. The exception to this is in combat, where weapons become more difficult to learn as you advance in skill level. One way or the other folks, surely? But there's more of the same when we get to skill use. For some bizarre reason combat skills work by rolling over a skill value on a D20, while normal skills are straight percentile rolls. Quite unnecessary inconsistency. And the magic system also has this 'roll-over-on-a-D20' mechanic. While I'm on the subject of the magic system, though, it's worth noting that the system has promise. Rather than the tedious old learning of spells, young *caji* learn to control their *Isho* (the

ambient energy of Jorune) and use it to create *dyshas*. The dyshas are colour coded into seven groups, and the colours have significance in that they can be comprehended as a form of 'aura'. What with creation of Orbs, and creeping tendrils of energy, this system feels far more atmospheric than most. Unfortunately it suffers from the RuneQuest problem; almost all the dyshas are combat dyshas, or at least combat-related. The designers can't think beyond the tedious old track of 'adventuring' and so don't bother to postulate the possibility that over the centuries a variety of useful but peaceful applications for Isho might have been found. Again the designers preach at the readers, stigmatising a particular colour group because it is overtly violent, and muttering about law and order. This is sheer hypocrisy when *all* the colour groups are violent. If the designers think it's so damn important for players of Jorune to avoid hack and slay then they should have designed the world and the system to encourage this, rather than just lambasting the poor punters every now and again.

Now we get to the jolly bit: combat. I find this fascinating because it's such an artful blend of good ideas with really terrible ones. I'll explain by going through the procedure of combat. First an initiative roll of sorts, called Advantage, determines who can act in the round. Yep, that's right, you have a 25% chance of not being able to do anything else in the round, and a 25% of chance of only being able to defend. The modifications to the roll are so slim that the thing goes beyond the level of sheer irritation and into the realms of the stupid. After Advantage come attacks. If they are capable of attacking in a round, characters make a D20 roll over their weapon skill to see if they can hit. If they are lucky enough to be able to defend, their opponents may make a D20 roll to defend. Assuming the blow lands, the attacker makes a 2D6 roll for hit location, followed by a 2D6 roll (with modifications) for armour penetration. Assuming they can get through the armour they then make a 2D6 roll on the injury table. Since injuries are qualitative (Superficial, Minor, Major, Critical, and Death) they are determined by comparing the roll to the weapon track on the injury table (the same principle is applied to dyshas and other damage, incidentally). A table then gives the effects of the different types of wound by location.

A lot of dice rolling, I think you'll agree. Bits of it are good - the qualitative gets a little more description into combat (though I suppose after a couple of combats you'd probably cease to register the wounds except in game-mechanics terms). Bits of it seem just messy. And bits strike me as badly thought out. For example, the only difference between a knife and a sword is that the sword is 10% better at defending. Apart from that they attack the same, penetrate the same, and do the same damage. Not the kind of thing to inspire confidence in the game designers' grasp of combat.



Black Ssú (From Swords & Glory Book 1)

I've already drawn attention to the irritating habit of sticking rules into background sections (also a problem with RuneQuest 2), so I'll turn my attention to Empire of the Petal Throne. The system employed here is a slightly improved version of original D&D. I can't think of anything much to say about it except that I don't think it's worth playing. Barker did design some new rules, published as Swords & Glory, but the company publishing them went bust and for some reason Different Worlds decided to go back to the originals. Swords & Glory was interesting, if a little overcomplex, and its loss is a body-blow to Tékumel.

PRODUCT QUALITY

Jorune is a slick and well-designed product. It is clearly laid out, with consistent and attractive page-framing, and its illustrations are superb. If there is a single factor which gets across the atmosphere of Jorune it is the illustration. The whole package is well up to the standards of Warhammer material, and possibly more appealing in subject matter.

On the negative side, the writing style tends to drift into the incomprehensibly jargonistic at times (excusable when the jargon employed is that of Jorune - unfortunately it is all-too-frequently West Coast American). What's more the organisation is a little haphazard. I've heard it rumoured that some technical disaster overcame Jorune shortly before its publication, and SkyRealms had to salvage the game from the drafts they had in very little time. This is entirely believable.

Empire of the Petal Throne suffers once again from being an ancient system reprinted. Its illustration (many by Barker himself) are not the most technically accomplished I've seen, though they give an impression of the 'look' of Tsolyánu. The design is minimal, the typography uninspired. The writing style is more accomplished than that of Jorune though the rewarding insights must be gleaned from rather wordy paragraphs. On the whole, though, the only things EPT has going for it are its low price and its reputation. Jorune wipes the floor with it on all other counts.

FEEL

This section is going to be coloured by my prejudices even more than the previous sections. However I think it's important to do my best to get over the way the games feel in play. Unfortunately I've never played EPT as written for the reasons given in the above section. So I'm mainly contrasting the type of game the designers seem to have had in mind. The first thing to note is that even though it was produced in 1975, EPT is not limited to the dungeon-bash mentality. For a game so old it's remarkable in its broad focus. Later editions and material have made it clear that the whole of Tékumel is ripe for player character action. There's room for warfare, court intrigue, rip-roaring adventure, wild hedonism and any other type of play you fancy. If there's an overall feel, it's composed of two factors. One is the overbearing pressure of society. Tsolyáni society is all-pervading, and after a few sessions of the game it should almost become a palpable presence. The second factor is best compared to that of Call of Cthulhu. Tékumel was influenced by many pulp writers (Barker admits to R E Howard, Jack Vance and E R Burroughs) and it doesn't seem unreasonable to suggest that H P Lovecraft also provided inspiration. Many of the creatures have the same ability to place a clammy hand on your heart as Lovecraft's unspeakable horrors. The Tékumeli deities also have much in common with the various Old Ones (though I concede I may be influenced here by my first Tékumel character, whose view of the gods is more than a little tinged with paranoia). It is the horrific aspect of play, and the way in which characters can be blasted into nothingness by dabbling too deeply in matters of Higher Powers, that makes the Tékumeli Underworld adventure something rather more dramatic than its traditional D&D counterpart. The Underworld is there for a reason - it's not an artificial game construct. An adventure in a well-run Tékumel Underworld will bring back the fear and excitement of that first dungeon bash.

Jorune doesn't present the same breadth of possibility. Furthermore, no guidance is given the Sholari on how to run an adventure in Jorune apart from a set of encounter tables. This smacks of 'we want to sell our scenarios so let's not encourage them to design their own'. Of course, any referee with experience is going to be able to set the players up straight

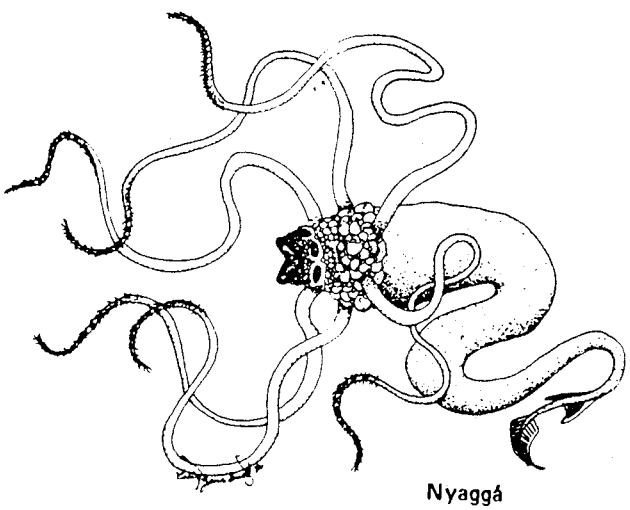
away with obligations to perform tasks for Drenn. But without a strong feel for society the main options are going to be standard 'adventuring' options. In Jorune these will be more interesting than in traditional fantasy, but that's not enough. On the plus side Jorune has a little of what I was describing for Tékumel. Mainly because of the illustrations, the creatures of Jorune evoke appropriate reactions (though I find the thriddle overly cute - I suppose it's something to do with the designers being Californians). It's all done in a far more 'obvious' manner than Tékumel, and in some places apes Barker's method of setting up in-game associations to evoke responses (eg. 'glittering metal and boiling water' to Tékumel's 'musty cinnamon and high, sweet chiming').

In some ways Jorune has everything over Tékumel - the production, the organisation, the availability. It is only the feel that is lacking. Tékumel has the feel. It is a personal creation, it has coherence, it has depth and it has atmosphere. Jorune feels like it was put together by a committee - as, indeed, it was. It also feels as though it was put together as a product, whereas Tékumel is more like one man's creation made public. The obvious comparison here is with Tolkien. It would be a rash soul who tried to argue that Tolkien wrote his books to make money. Barker's world, like Tolkien's, was created as an exercise of the imagination upon which the author's singular academic skills were lavished. While Tolkien chose to employ the mythology common to all of us of European heritage, Barker created his own, drawing mainly on non-European cultures such as those of Central America and the Near and Far East. Jorune, on the other hand, fails to operate on a mythological level at all, and as a result doesn't achieve the necessary feeling of alieness. The most telling demonstration of this is the illustration of a Tauther standing in front of the Drenn Wall. His appearance and dress are such that he wouldn't look out of place in any western nation. If a warrior-priest of Chiténg turned up in your High Street, though, you'd *certainly* notice him!

RUNNING THE GAMES

You've probably got the idea by now that I prefer Tékumel to Jorune. But don't think that this means I'm going to suggest that if you're umming and ahing which of the two to get you should rush out and buy EPT. Empire of the Petal Throne is a tragic mistake - that a modern games company should publish it is almost unbelievable (especially as they compound the error of the previous publishers by not including a map!). Much as I like Tékumel, I don't think EPT is worth buying in its current form - Jorune is by far the better product (though at a suitably inflated price, I should add). If you wish to play a game of this sort then you'd be better off with Jorune. Unfortunately, you'll probably find you've been suckered into a marketing trap and have to buy one or more of the supplements. But you might be so enthralled with the world that you want to do this anyway (much of Jorune feels as if it was designed to be enthralling - consequently it doesn't enthral me!). The alternative is to wait until the Tékumel Sourcebook is readily available. It's apparently the same as the Gamescience edition (Swords & Glory), so it should contain all you need to run a Tékumel game, *except* the rules. You can then use your favourite rules, suitably amended, to play the game, or you can custom design your own. The latter is what Gail did after discovering the unavailability of Swords & Glory, and the naffness of EPT.

In writing this review I am indebted to Marc for providing so much of the source material, and to Dave, Steve, Jamie, Min, Jack and Oliver for providing the remainder.



Nyaggá

DÆDAL DOUBLE VISIONS

Or, Now Just Hold on a Minute

These are my responses to, and ruminations on, some of the issues raised by Paul Mason in his article; for the most part I will limit the discussion to Jorune only, though I may digress to compare Tékumel and Jorune where I think it is directly relevant. Since Paul was good enough to catalogue what materials he had to hand I will do the same: I have all of the 3rd edition material for Jorune, and everything for the out of print 2nd edition except the Maustin Caji module. I have never even sniffed the 1st edition. For Tékumel I have the Sourcebook (S&G 1), four issues of 'The Eye of All Seeing Wonder' and numerous internet clippings, courtesy of Matthew Pook. I'd like to thank Matthew and Bob Dushay for sharing their thoughts on both Tékumel and Jorune, though not necessarily with this article in mind. For simplicty's sake I'll follow the same headings used by Paul.

THE SETTING

Common threads in the background of Tékumel and Jorune are not particularly suspicious, in my opinion; I don't know whether Jorune's designers read Barker or not, but Andrew Leker has made it plain that the embryonic Jorune game developed as part of a campaign based on TSR's Metamorphosis Alpha, which also used human colonisation of the stars as a starting point. This is the crux of it - 'Robinson Crusoe in Space' is not a particularly original idea. There are many common platforms for this basic premise. I also believe that Jorune has more to do with traditional American themes than with Barker's world or sources.

For example, the myth-image of the Frontier is a common one in American society, from Fenimore Cooper (The Pioneers, Deerslayer) to Star Trek ('The Final Frontier'). Whether it's John Wayne or John Rambo, the hero of the western - and the modern day action movie - usually ends his quest by heading West, toward the setting sun. Jorune taps straight into this New World mythos, replacing cowboys with space colonists and American Indians with shanthas. The humans are, in a very real sense, the settlers and pioneers. A big give-away is the nature of the disagreement between shanthas and humans: breaking of treaties, desecration of sacred land, incursions into the living territory of the indigenous peoples. There is more; Jorune is humanity's last chance after the destruction of Earth, it becomes the 'City on a Hill' and the 'Last Best Hope' of mankind that the early Puritans talked about. The same phrases cropped up in the rhetoric of Ronald Reagan. Hand in hand with that is a Garden of Eden type image; anyone who has seen Miles Teve's depiction of the Gire invasion of Sydra will recognise Adam and Eve when they see them, in this case surrounded by Evil as depicted by the ramian.

There is an assumption throughout Paul's article that 'too American' equals 'bad'. It's not clear to me why this should be; why is an American mythic image intrinsically inferior to one culled from Europe or the Far East? In fact since the majority of rolegamers are in the U.S. why should they need to junk their heritage and assimilate a new one for the sake of gaming? I'll stick my hand up here and admit that my academic background is mainly in American history, politics, and literature, and I've lived in the country for an extended period of time; but surely I can't be the only one fascinated by a country so diverse and so contradictory, one that can produce both the Bill of Rights and the massacre at My Lai.

The only problem I have with Jorune's Americaness - and it's no big deal - is the sometimes juvenile writing style ("cool!") and the more transparent American-influenced

institutions, eg. the powers of the Dharsage being readily recognisable as those of an American President. But even here there is an in-game reason for this as Khodre has read Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence and a major player in framing the Constitution.

The differing timescales of Tékumel and Jorune make a major difference to the history. As I understand it Tékumel is 85,000 years on from the original terraforming and colonisation, while Jorune's history is a 'mere' 3500 years. The missing timeline that Paul is concerned about appears in the 3rd edition Sholari Pack, and very thorough it is. Basically it took millennia of relapse and regrowth to reach Jorune's present point, as war, disease, and the hostile environment took their toll on a struggling humanity. Humans have grown on Jorune from a survivor base of just a few thousand - they were an endangered species. As the game opens Burdoth is the pinnacle of human civilisation, with large pockets of Jorune still operating on subsistence farming and tribal organisation. There are indeed concessions to playability. There has to be; Russell Hoban's "Riddley Walker" is one of the best novels I've read, but its post-apocalyptic world (about 2,000 years after a civilisation-ending catastrophe) would make a terrible rolegame. It's too realistic for playable science-fiction.

I agree with Paul in so far as Jorune's opening can seem a little tepid. As I discussed in issue 2, the Tauther Guide can be taken in two ways: as a genuine treatise to an ignorant population or as a piece of Burdothian propaganda. I'd suggest that the 'dramatic backdrop' Paul favours can easily be created by the GM if s/he so desires. What the Tauther Guide does so well for Jorune is suck first-time players into the world. It is to the point, well written, and above all interesting. As much as I enjoyed the Tékumel Sourcebook it is not particularly user-friendly, being at times dense and rather verbose.

Jorune's Earth-tec equipment is indeed described in detail, though there are constant reminders that most Jorune natives will not have seen any of it. Although qualities will be assigned to Earth-tec that border on the supernatural, its origin as a tool of the colonists is incontrovertible. Tékumel's approach is to use technology, such as the Eyes, and then ascribe them magical powers not unlike some AD&D items; not especially convincing, either in terms of what a technological item could do (eg. make the target fall in love with the user) or in their physical design (a small sphere about the size of a baseball doesn't strike me as a practical tool, unless it was thrown).

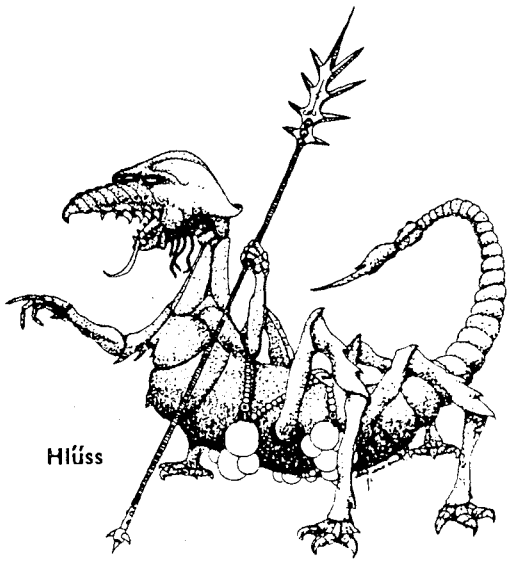
THE CREATURES

I disagree with Paul that Jorune has a lot of weird new monsters; weird and new, yes, but not lots. Jorune is more reminiscent of RuneQuest than AD&D, with a limited stable of other races, each of which has a well defined society and behaviour patterns. Most of Jorune's beasties, almost all that will be significant in play, are sentient. In the 15 years or so that Jorune has been around only one extra race has been introduced into the game's background and even this was hinted at in the 2nd edition (the 3rd adds the tologra, the 'lost' Iscin race). I like Tékumel's creatures too, particularly the Hlüss, the Mihálli and the Nyaggá. Craig Smith's illustrations in the Sourcebook are certainly of a high standard. The criticism of Jorune's Iscin races has some validity; I find them the hardest to assimilate logically, but in the end the game would be very different without them. Miles Teves' illustrations are bloody marvellous; if White Wolf can sell art calenders of their World of Darkness illustrations, Teves should be making a mint. To be fair to Paul he is using the 2nd edition, which misses out much of the information that would come with Playing the Iscin Races and Shanthas of Jorune, not to mention the essays that SkyRealms sold by mail; most of this is in the 3rd edition rulebook.

THE SOCIETY

I find myself in some agreement with Paul over the rather skimpy notes about cultural life on Jorune and the haphazard way in which some of the game rules appear in inappropriate places. However, I do feel that enough of Jorune's society is presented to enable play to begin. The question is whether you require a gameworld that is a solid read or one that you can pick up and play (the ideal is both those things of course); Jorune is more in the latter category, Tékumel more in the former. The Tékumel Sourcebook is a gold mine of information, but not all of it is directly relevant to the matter at hand, ie. playing the game. I have attempted to uncover something of Burdothian life in the 'Politics of Burdoth' series of articles, but it is true that the non-humans of Jorune receive much deeper treatment than the pure-strain humans. As I

said earlier, Jorune is a fractured society of have and have-nots, the comparatively rich and the impoverished, the educated and the tribal. This diversity precludes the kind of society envisaged on Tékumel, which has greater stability, a much higher population and a more stratified design.



Religion on Jorune (or lack thereof) was apparently a hot topic on the Jorune mailing list last summer, and it's a common criticism of the game. Jorune does have religion, and those are mainly remnants of old Earth beliefs, mixed with the philosophy that Jorune is a living Gaian-like planet (see Bob Dushay's article in this issue). There are a few in-game reasons why religion isn't a big deal for most of Jorune's inhabitants: it is unlikely that the original colonists were holy rollers, though I'm sure preachers would have wanted to be on that maiden flight (I'm less convinced they would have made the list); the Iscin Races know who their Creator was, so no mumbo-jumbo is required; other alien races are also aware of exactly why they are on Jorune, they may have native beliefs but these aren't in the forefront of their thinking; educated humanity is well aware that they are descended from starfaring humans who came from a planet called Earth, and most know that this was a physical, real, place. Earth-tec pops up to remind them that they are resident aliens on Jorune, not Created there to serve god(s).

But the most important reason for the lack of religion in game material is that gods *do not* exist on Jorune. The setting is SF, not fantasy, and gods are not a part of it. It's not that the designers are uninterested in religion in rolegames, it's that they're uninterested in religion on Jorune. The trappings of religion in rolegames are also missing - spell casting, demon summoning, inter-planar travel, et al. Most rolegames use religion as the hook to hang their magic systems on (RuneQuest cults, AD&D clerics) but on Jorune there is no Divine Magic, power from the Planes Beyond, or lists of Beings to be worshipped and sacrificed to. Even Jorune's 'magic' system is rationalised as part of the planet's organic structure. Religion is thus not needed as an RPG device. Tékumel has a thorough system of religion and does include Higher Beings in its mythos; all well and good, but despite the assertion that these may be super-ETIs the environment of the gameworld is strongly in the fantasy rolegame camp.

Barker also has these interesting remarks about religion and society (Tékumel Sourcebook, p.25): "The absolute, demonstrable certainty of the existence of the gods and their immanence in mankind's affairs stifled intellectual curiosity...and theorizing which might have led to a Renaissance and an Age of Reason. The societies of the planet grew ever more formalized, structured, and conservative, born down beneath the panoply of imperial glory and the weight of hoary tradition."

CHARACTER MOTIVATION

I don't have much to add to Paul's analysis on this topic; his reservations about the tax collection system mirror my own, and I agree that Jorune is ripe for exploitation by power gamers. However, I do think the Drenn system is a neat and elegant way to get players into Jorune; it is structured, accessible, and combines game mechanics with gameworld interaction. The design intentions may actually be rather sneaky - lure 'em in with a hint of Big Guns but then actually reveal what the game is about (interaction with alien cultures). Hopefully the players won't realise they've been hi-jacked.

There is a slight confusion over the nature of adventuring on Jorune, in that Paul chastises the game for not providing enough structure, and then accuses the setting of lacking possibilities for innovative gaming. The basic link between Tauther and 'adventures' is the fact that Drenn 'pull challisks' from the Hall of Drenn when they want a job done (that job being up to the creativity of the GM) and interview prospective Tauther who might be up to the task. It's simple - register your Tothis, wait for the job offers, prove yourself. In some ways it's reminiscent of the patron system used in Traveller. Not all adventures need be for challisk marks, and I'd recommend that

perhaps only one in three be of this type. The rest will come from the usual sources: solid characterisation, interesting plots not connected with Drennship, and from the players themselves. In other words, exactly the same things that happen with any well run campaign. The Drenn system is optional really, but it's an easy entry into the world.

THE RULES

The 3rd edition of Jorune relies on D20 checks for all skills, but retains the mix of D20 and 2D6 for the combat system. Paul's statement that "...if they are lucky enough to defend" should perhaps be "...if they are *skilled* enough to defend" since a good warrior will not suffer from low Advantage as often as a novice. Also, shield parries can take effect regardless of Advantage, and there is always the Evade option. Knives do not do the same damage as swords, though for armour penentration they are indeed the same (to cut down some of that intrusive dice rolling, no doubt).

I quite like the combat system; it gives a good ebb-and-flow feel to a fight, in that a character who begins to take a few knocks finds himself fatigued and at a disadvantage until an opportunity to counter presents itself. Anyone who has been knocked to the ground in a scrap or stunned by a particularly hard blow will know how difficult it can be to recover. I think Jorune's combat system has this down quite well. I also like the way in which the sheer bulk of some creatures are relayed in the rules: a Size modifier reduces the 2D6 damage roll, and on a 2-12 scale that can make quite a difference, reflecting the fact that while a big guy may not be very hard to hit, it's damn hard to inflict telling damage. I've had a player-character repeatedly connect with fists on a corastin (Size +3), only to see the blows have no discernible effect. The PC made a swift exit when the corastin began to tire of the exercise, but it was a much better way to simulate that kind of thing than giving the corastin X amounts of armour points or a low 'armour class'.

Concerning dyshas, there is indeed a tendency to make all dysha groups 'adventure' orientated; but what rolegame doesn't do this? We're getting back to the râison d'etre of rolegaming - to have a good time, to enjoy oneself in another environment. Hopefully it will be immersive and internally consistent, but the emphasis is usually on playability first and foremost. 'Flour raising' magic is neither particularly apropos nor interesting, at least not in a scenario setting (not usually anyway). I don't think I've come across a magic system in a rolegame whose spell lists were not geared toward the player-characters achieving some beneficial result for themselves, usually in the shortest time possible. I'm not denying that more mundane magic, or magic that intrinsically forms a part of a particular gameworld, can make good reading and source material. But this doesn't necessarily make it a better game.

If you need a reason for the prevalence of combat orientated dyshas, here's one: Caji Gends was only taught the basics of Isho mastery, those dyshas that he could weave quickly and easily and whose effect was most obvious. When he returned to the muadra peoples this teaching was further diluted, as such things often are. Pure-strain persecution of the muadra led to violent clashes, and the most efficacious dyshas were quickly taught to muadra fighters. The Maustin Caji rampage aptly demonstrates that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. In effect the muadra communities turned their ploughshares into swords. In the game's present day, 50 years after the last serious encounter, muadra are just beginning to refine dysha use for midwifery, engineering, and other pursuits. Real shanthic Sholari would balk at the same title being bestowed on a muadra; that the muadra could know anything of the real depth of Isho manipulation is an affront to the art.

PRODUCT QUALITY

Jorune up to the standards of Warhammer? Paul, you didn't happen to be working for Games Workshop at the time did you?! I don't know if Jorune's typesetting was beset with problems, but in the 3rd edition there are a few irritating mistakes and a general feeling that a lot was crammed in, sometimes in the wrong place. Trying to condense a decade's worth of Jorune material into one book must have been a nightmare. The 3rd edition files have apparently been eaten, so here's a novel concept: make back-up files and store them in a safe place. Paul's assertion that the writing is jargonistic is somewhat justified, though again we also have plain anti-American sentiment creeping in. I have to say here that Paul neglects to mention that while Barker's script is clear his names of places, people, and items are virtually unpronounceable, or at least hard work until you get the hang of it. Éngsvan hla Gánga Kolumébabárdálisa anyone? It may be authentic - I believe that one of the first building blocks of Tékumel was the language -

but this must scare gamers off, surely. Sometimes it seems downright obtuse. The Tékumel Sourcebook does have a certain nostalgia about it though, with old style hex maps and Chaosium-esque close type. I find this quite endearing.

FEEL

I don't see why all the scenario possibilities that Paul lavishes on Tékumel are not relevant to Jorune. There is no back-up for the statement that "Jorune doesn't present the same breadth of possibility". Paul makes the point and moves on. One of the things I like about Jorune is that it can be played a variety of ways, from Star Wars type SF to something more in the HR Giger mould, from gritty fight-to-survive scenarios to swashbuckling fantasy. My personal preference is to get my hands dirty, as it were, to concentrate on small detail and build around it. Other styles of play will suit other gaming groups. It is also a little unfair to accuse SkyRealms of the cynical marketing exhibited by larger companies; only two supplements were officially released for the 2nd edition in the UK, and both were campaign expansions of Burdoth (the characters' home realm) and Ardoth (its capital). Jorune may have been well produced but I don't think it ever made any real money. I actually appreciate the 'hands off' approach of the designers - they care for their creation but they're big enough to let it go, to allow GMs to *create*.

The Underworld is "...not an artificial game construct"? Oh yes it is! A very clever one, nicely atmospheric with the layers of various long-dead empires occurring at regular intervals, and a whiff of superstitious Egyptian tomb robbers creeping in. Liked it a lot, as I like all good scenario hooks. If a city genuinely had that many subterranean passages beneath it I would think it would collapse due to subsidence!

We have another presumption that the Jorune designers actively copied Barker (with the in-game associations comment), which I don't believe. I'm not even going to get into the hero-worship afforded Barker and the claims made on his behalf. That has got me into enough hot water as it is. You pay a price for the level of involvement Tékumel brings, and that is reflected in its accessibility. I get the distinct impression that Tékumel appeals most strongly to those people who enjoy hunting around second-hand bookshops for that elusive gem (which includes me, incidentally). The exclusiveness is a snug fit. I wouldn't disagree that Jorune is a product, both a commercial one and one of the imagination. It is a rich gameworld that is also very easy to get to grips with. Yes, the initial hook ("150 years from now..." etc) could easily be the opening lines of a Hollywood trailer for George Lucas's next movie; is this too 'obvious' and 'too American'? It doesn't matter. What matters is how much I'm getting out of the game environment.

RUNNING THE GAMES

To say that a rolegame was "...designed to be enthralling" is a tautological statement. *All* rolegames are designed to be enthralling! A lot of what Paul seems to be enthusing about seems not to be Tékumel as it stands (he admits to not playing EPT as written), but the group/campaign/character he is involved with at the time. This is perfectly reasonable, but to suggest that anyone who wants a similar experience must first design their own rules is a trifle perverse. A gamer doesn't buy an RPG and then expect to have to sit down and work out a rules system to enjoy it.

Luckily for prospective Tékumel gamers Dave Morris has come up with a highly playable system - Tirikélu - serialised in the EPT fanzine 'Eye of All Seeing Wonder'. The S&G books are very good value, though I wish the third had been published (if only for the pronunciation guide!). Tékumel's publishing record is still a mess. Jorune currently has an on, off, on-again situation going with a proposed 4th edition, but the 3rd is still a good buy. The Sholari Pack is the only indispensable supplement. The two games have a credible amount in common but are at heart rather different in approach and emphasis. My honest opinion? GM one and play the other, an arrangement I'm hoping to be part of.

RUNNING SCARED

By Alex Blair

Original concept by Alex Blair. Editing, maps, and updating to 3rd edition by Matthew Pook.

This is an adventure for a small group of characters of any experience. This is the scenario that I began my campaign with. The format will still leave the sholari with some work to do. The material given is more an idea than a fully 'ready to run' scenario. When I write an adventure I have the idea for the basic plot and then design the NPCs. The rest of the work is done at the beginning of each gaming session when I decide exactly wghat I want to happen. I found that trying to do any more than this is a waste as the players will invariably do something else instead. The scenario will be broken down into the following parts: Background, Plot, Information, Maps, and NPCs.

BACKGROUND

Sareess Nesh is a trader based in Ardoth. He is not an honest trader, far from it. He is corrupt and immoral, willing to buy or sell anything - not matter how illegal it is. The only thing that matters to him is making money. Lots of it.

Approximately eight months ago Sareess was in the Bazaar doing business when he overheard two crugar making enquiries about the hiring of cheap labour. Sareess approached the two crugar and asked what they meant by this. He soon found out what they really wanted. The crugar were in the employ Arn Cartale, the youngest son of a rich Ardothian family. Amongst other assets the family owns a small mine located in the west face of South Khodre's Dowtrough mountains, in a town about half way between Choulth and Rirris. The town is called Relass.

Sareess found out that by the term 'cheap labour' the crugar meant slave labour, which they wanted to use to dig out valuable crystals that are adundant on the west face. The idea of anyone using slaves did not bother Sareess at all, and seeing the chance to make money he made direct contact with Arn Cartale, who was in Ardoth at the time. Two days after meeting the crugar Sareess finalised a deal with Arn Cartale; Sareess agreed to locate and ship a regular supply of slaves tp Relass and in reurn Arn would pay a regular amount each month, as well as a percentage of the mine's profits. Within days Sareess had his personal guards searching Ardoth for people that could be 'removed' from society without being missed by anybody. The first twenty slaves were found from the dregs of Ardothian society: drunks, beggars, and cheap prostitutes. That was the easy part of the plan. More difficult was how he was going to move twenty people from Ardoth to South Khodre undetected.

It did not take Sareess's inventive mind long to think up a way of shipping the slaves. After they had been escorted to one of his safe-houses they would be bound, gagged and drugged, and then placed inside barrels of smoked fish ready to be shipped to Gauss. Each barrel would have a false top and bottom to hide the real contents. Once in Gauss the prisoners would be transferred into specially hollowed out durligs, after having been washed down to rid them of the smell of fish. The durligs have been preserved by sealing them in large store rooms of salt to remove all the moisture. In essence they are mummified, a process that takes several weeks, prior to them being sealed up and shipped with other durligs to South Khodre. Sareess holds a contract with the army to supply them with food. Although the mainstay of the army food, salted durlig is extremely popular and local civilians are very happy to sell their own fresh produce to Burdothian soldiers for an extra yule or two.

The system has worked well for eight months, with an acceptable loss of slaves during transportation - until last night. On this evening the parents of one of the PCs witnessed the abduction of a drunkard sheltering in a doorway. Sareess's guards noticed them observing, and knowing that if their operation was found out they (and Sareess) would hang for their crimes, followed them home and abducted everyone there. Removing them to the safe-house they made up the numbers for the next shipment to the mine.

PLOTLINE

I'm Just Going for A Quiet Stroll...

The characters are going to start the adventure on the Sarat, a coastal path that runs to the south of Ardoth, along the cliffs. The PC whose parents have been kidnapped should be taken to one side and told that when he returns from a trip out of Ardoth he finds his home empty. The front door will be wide open, nobody is home. There will be obvious signs of a struggle as several ornaments have been knocked over and there is a blood stain on the floor. When the PV tries to find out what happened he will come up against a brick wall; nobody saw what happened and no real clues have been left to follow. If the yords are called in they will notice that no money has been taken. They will think this stramge but there is nothing they can really do about the disappearance apart from keeping an eye out for the family. They will apologise, explaining that there is little more they can do.

You may suggest, or have an NPV suggest, that the PC could do with a walk on the Sarat to clear his mind. You must also come up with a reason why all the other PCs are taking a walk if this is a new group, but good players should help you out on this point. At some point in the walk the players should be very near to each other or actually in a group. At this point, about a mile away from Ardoth (just out of sight of the city), the group will be ambushed from above by a group of thugs. The thugs have been hired by Sareess's right-hand man Yartell Traish. Their job is to capture the PC whose parents have been abducted. Armed only with swords, they will also attack any people near enough to tell the yords about the attack, ie. the other PCs.

They will give up if it is obvious they are going to lose. Those that surrender will tell the PCs that they were hired by a man to capture the PC and bring him to a point about half a mile south of Ardoth. If the PCs go to that point no-one will turn up, as Yartell has been following the thugs to keep an eye on them. He will also make a note of anyone that came to the aid of the intended victim. Reporting back to Sareess, he will tell him what has happened.

This is the end of the first encounter. Hopefully it should bring the players together, if a group had to be formed like mine. If the group is already established there should be no problems here. The PCs should head back to Ardoth. The yords will not be interested in their story as they will think it is just an elaboration by the thugs to cover up the fact that they were going to rob the PCs.

Birds Of A Feather

The next encounter will happen wherever the PCs decide to stay the night. During the night they will be woken by a noise outside. This will be the sound of a young muadra girl kerning in the street below. She is defending herself from some of Sareess's guards. Her name is Simmilar Groat, and she is in much the same position as the PC with the missing parents. Her family owed Sareess money and have been taken as slaves. Simmilar has been on the run from these people for almost two days and is very tired. She is using controlled kerning to fight off the sic guards that are trying to capture here.

The PCs should be persuaded to help. It will not take much to help Simmilar as the guards will soon back off if anyone comes to her aid, as they have already attracted enough attention for one night. If the players confront the guards they will be grade 3 guards (see the NPC section). When she is safe Simmilar will break down in tears and not stop until she is comforted by someone. When she feels fully safe she will tell the PCs all she knows and what has happened to her family. She thinks that a trader called Sareess Nesh has taken her family because of a debt that her father has not paid. She does not know anymore than that. Although she has gone to the yords, they do not believe her as she has a reputation as a liar and a githerin.

I'm Sorry But That's Gonna Cost Ya...

The next part of the adventure should be very free-form in nature. If the PCs realise the importance of Simmilar's information they can try to find out about Sareess. The problem is that she rarely trusts people and will not volunteer her information willingly. Depending on their ideas and performance (the right connections, appropriate skills, but preferably through roleplaying) you should allow the PCs to discover some facts about what is going on. They will find out the following:

(a) Who Sareess is and what he does: Sareess is one of the most successful traders in Ardoth...He deals in many, many markets, not all of them legal...He is charming and honest...His main trade recently has been with South Khodre. He was awarded a contract about eight months ago to supply

preserved durlig to the army units stationed there.

(b) Where he works from and where his house is: He works from an office in the Bazaar...His Ardothian house is in Lorri.

(c) Who Sareess's right-hand man is and what he does: Yartell Traish is his right()hand man...He is never seen without a pair of swords (see the NPC section).

Whilst the PCs are are trying to find out exactly who they are up against you should try to make them feel uneasy. Have them spot people following them, just to make them feel a little paranoid. Also, don't let them get all the above information for free, get them to work for it. NPCs will want something in return for information and that may not always be money. If you plan this bit you and the players can have a lot of fun.

Oh No, Not Again!!
At a convenient point when the PCs are off-guard you should let Yartell and a large group of grade 3 guards capture them. Let the players think they have a chance - even though they don't. They *must* be captured at this point for the rest of the adventure to work. If you don't get them first time, keep throwing NPCs at them until they are caught. Remember that Sareess is desperate at this point to capture these people because what they know could get him executed. When you have caught them all they will be taken to one of the safe-houses, a thombo stable-shop. They will be guarded until the following morning until some more people have been captured. The PCs will be transported to Relass to become more slaves in Arn Cartale's mines...

INFORMATION

The Cartale Family

The Cartales are a family of very wealthy semi-nobles based in Ardoth. Nichall's great-grandfather was a distant relation of the ruling Dharsage of the time and it was because of this that the family was awarded the rights to a small mining town in South Khodre, shortly after the Dharsage began his rule of the country. Despite the constant threat that the mine's crystal seams might dry up, the then famil head Garran Cartale invested much of his family fortune into the mine. Fortuantely the mine did not dry up and Garran's risk paid off. The family fortune was substantially increased and ensured. Currently there are nine members of the family, headed by Nichall Cartale.

Nichall Cartale is 57 years old and very fond of his four children as well as his daught-in-law, Remar. He is also anxious that his only daughter, Yavall, should be married off to the right man. Although he lacks solid evidence he suspects his toungest son, Arn, is using slave labour in the mines. This does not bother him as Arn is currently reaping large profits, and even if he were found out Nichall has the power and influence to get his son out of trouble.

Nichall's wife, Janan, is 48 years old. She knows nothing of her family's business methods and her only concerns are those pertaining to the upkeep and well being of her home and family.

Nichall's eldest son Jarl and his family do not live with the rest of the Cartale household. He and his wife Remar are both 27 and have children seven and four years old. Jarl is trying to set himself up in business to prove that he can get on in life without the help of his father. Although unaware of it he does receive a fair amount of help from Nichall.

Tanmire is 23 years old and is preparing to take over the family business, as ghe thinks Jarl will decline the offer. Unfortunately Tanmire is a poor businessman and his father keeps handing him relatively unimportant duties. He knows nothing of Arn's use of slaves.

Yavall is 20 years old and stunningly beautiful. Very quiet by nature, people think she is a little simple, but that is not the truth. She knows about the slaves because she heard her twin brother talking about them. Although she's very worried about it. she does not know what to do. She thinks that if she tells anybody it will bring disgrace to her family and get Arn hung. So she keeps the secret.

Arn is Yavall's twin. He is very bitter at the fact he was born two minutes after his sister and is thus

the youngest. He holds his family in the lowest possible regard and his view of his elder siblings is one of deepest disrespect. He prefers to live in South Khodre as it is as far away from them as he can get. The man is sometimes viewed as evil by those that know him, but it rather a case of him being completely amoral. He has no compunctions about using slave labour to make the maximum profit from *his* mine. He is determined to make himself the most successful of Nichall's sons in the vain hope that he will be given the business instead of his other brothers. He was given the job of running the mine by his father, who thought him the best suited to the job. Nothing will stop Arn from getting control of the family business. If Arn survives, it is possible that he will murder his way into the inheritance.

You can use the Cartale family when the PCs get back to Ardoth. Who they approach will affect how the problem is solved. Nichall will deny it all and try to get his son out of trouble. Janan will refer the PCs to Nichall. Jarl and his wife will go through the initial channels. Tanmire will dither around, generally getting nothing done. In the end he will go to his father. Yavall will not do anything about her brother, but perhaps she can be persuaded to help.

RELASS

Relass is a mining town on the west face of the Dowtrough in South Khodre. It has a reputation as a very rough town, even compared to some of the other minihg settlements. The population mix is composed of the following:

Human	60%	161
Crugar	34%	96
Boccord	5%	8
Muadra	1%	2

You may think that 96 crugar are out of place, but they are one of the most important parts of the town. The crugar are tolerated in the town because of an agreement that was forged two years ago between the crugar clan and Arn. The deal is quite simple; the crugar are allowed to live in the town and get 1% of the profits from the mine. In return the crugar will not allow any other crugar bands to attack the town. This made a very amicable arrangement as both sides got what they wanted with very little loss to themselves. The crugar get all the amenities of a town and the money from the mine just for making sure that nobody in Relass is bothered by any other crugar bands. Arn ensures the protection of *his* town and *his* mine and *his* profits.

Main Buildings in Relass (see Map)

[1]. Tool House: Where all the mining tools are kept.
[2]. Crystal Store House: Where the mined crytals are stored. Apart from the Cartale House this is the most secure building in the town. Guards are on duty around the clock.
[3]. Cartale Family House: Arn lives here most of the year, keeping the house like a palace. The house has its own well and guards.
[4]. Militia Quarters: The 50 strong town watch are quartered here. Most wear mail and are arned with swords and crossbows.
[5]. Watch Tower: A wooden structure from which all of the town can be seen, apart from the mines. Two guards are stationed here with crossbows and a telescope at all times.
[6]. Inclep: The only inclep in town, it is also home to the local money-lenders and an enclep (healers). It too is owned by Arn, who employs the Reskins (a muadra couple) to run the inclep. Prices are 1.5 to two times normal.
[7]. Sinth's Hut: The leader of the crugar, Sinth, lives here.
[8]. Meeting Hut: Metting place for the crugar.
[9]. Thombo Pens.
[10]. Marsh Land
[11]. Food Storage: The warehouses where all the goods are kept.

THE MINE

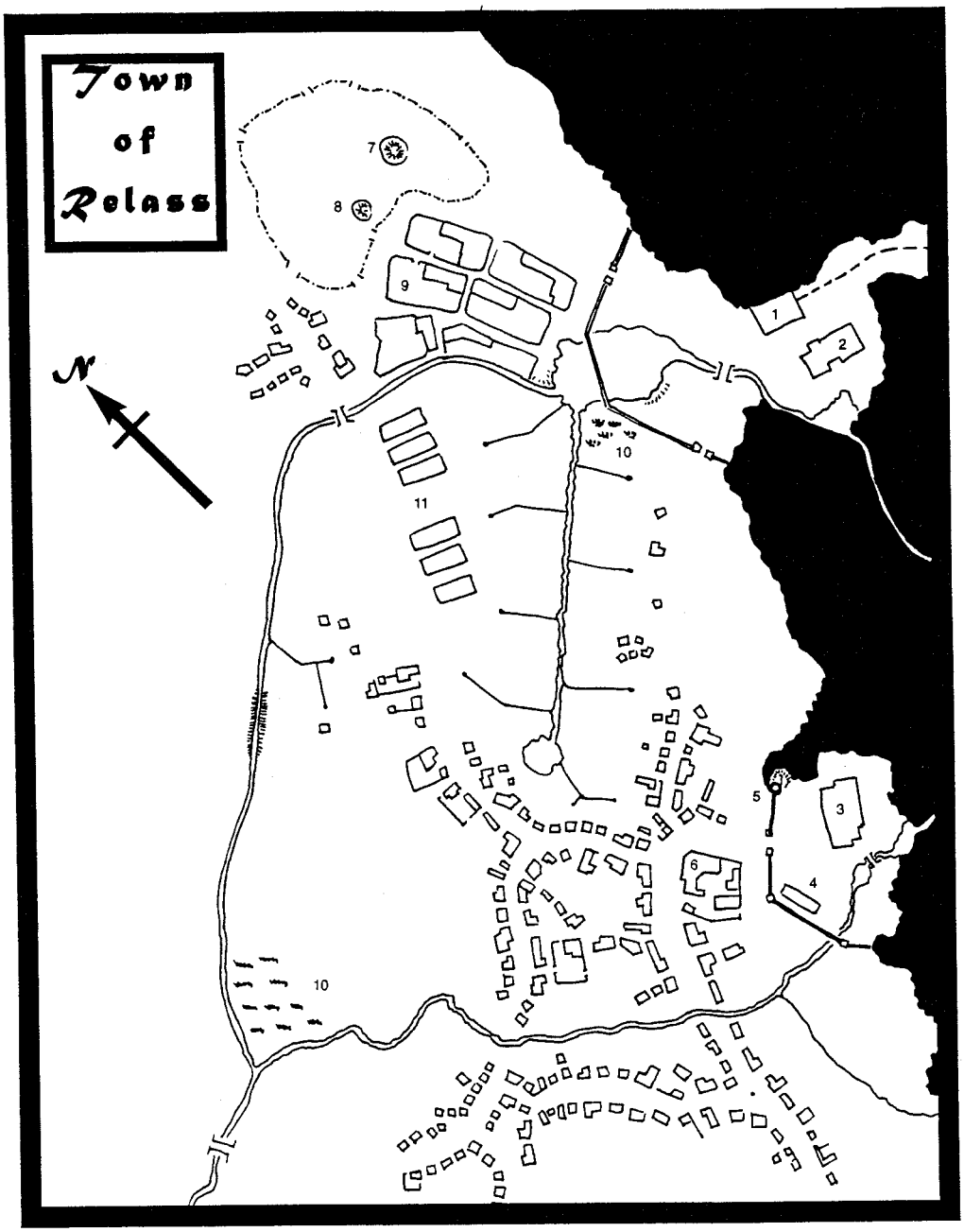
The mine is on two levels. The first level is used to mine the crystals (red, amber, yellow, and green are taken from the rich deposits). The crystals mined on level one are moved by trucks that run all the way through the mine along tracks (the heavy lines on the map). Level one also has the bucket lift

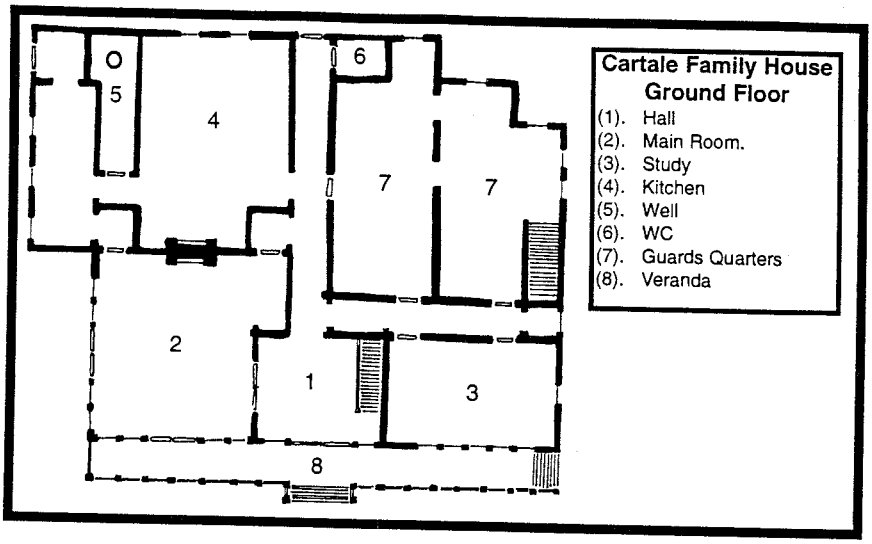
mechanism on it. A group of 20 slaves can operate the winch system and lift or lower about half a ton of material in the lift. The bucket lift is used mainly to move rocks or slaves.

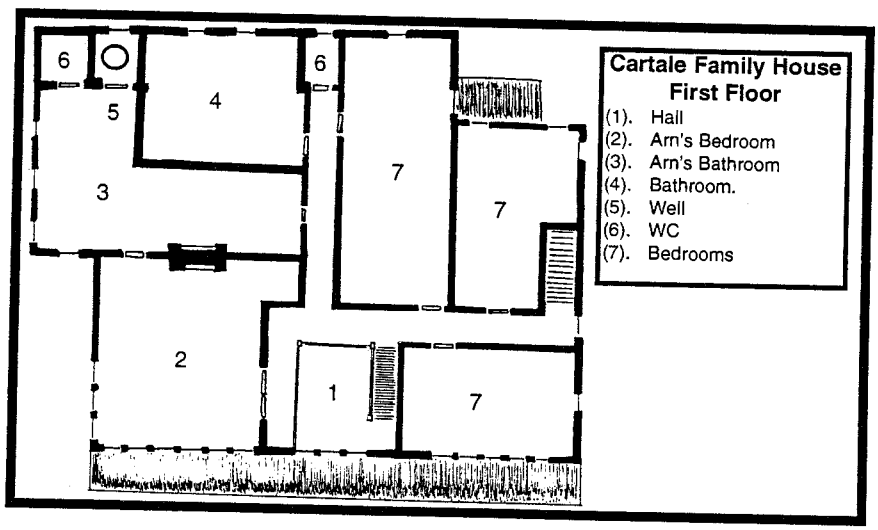
The second level was formed ny an old underground river lond dried up. It is used to house the slaves and to a much smaller extent for some limited mining. On level two any crystals that are extracted are removed to the bucket lift by being dragged along the floor in sacks. The slaves are kept chained together in groups of five. The guards will be human 80% of the time, occasionally replaced by a crugar. One guard will monitor an average of 20 slaves. The guards are armed with swords and whips. On each level there will also be four guards with crossbows. They work in shifts to cover the long hours worked by the slaves.

The daily timetable of events is as follows:

5.00 am: The slaves are woken and put to work. Anyone who tried to escape the day before is exceuted in front of the other slaves.
12.00 noon: The slave are allowed 10 minutes to rest and eat.
6.00 pm: The slaves are allowed another 15 minutes to rest and drink.
12.00 am: Work stops and the slaves are returned to the lower level.







NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

SAREESS NESH

CON: 11	STR: 10	SPD: 12
SOC: 16	EDU: 17	AIM: 13
COL: 14	LRN: 16	SPT: 11
ISH: 10	AGL: 15	LST: 14

Familiar with Knife, Storytelling, Geology (practical), Weather, Arithmetic, Crugar (spoken), Ramian (etiquette).
Experienced with Bribe, Oratory, Geography (classical), History (classical), Fast Talk.
Seasoned with Bargain and Contacts.

Saress is a charming but dangerous man. He is rich and very powerful, and has contacts everywhere. He and has a number of top notch guards with him at all times, his personal bodyguard being Yartell Traish. Sareess is well built and dark skinned, usually dressed in fine clothing. He arms himself with a gilded knife and a *lot* of money.

SIMMILAR GROAT

CON: 10	STR: 07	SPD: 15
SOC: 08	EDU: 11	AIM: 13
COL: 14	LRN: 12	SPT: 13
ISH: 18	AGL: 16	LST: 10

Familiar with Knife, Current Events, Bargain, Bribe, Pick Locks, Stalk, Conceal Self.
Experienced with Pick Pockets, Underground Info, Silent Move.

Dyshas of Shal (all Familiar): Brain Blast, Craze, Faint.

Simmilar has long auburn hair and generally looks rough (17 going on 36). She has to bring in all the money for her family because her family cannot work. As a result she is a githerin and a prostitute. Simmilar has a great deal of hate for the upper classes and will take any opportunity to steal from them. She is armed with a knife.

YARTELL TRAISH

CON: 15	STR: 15	SPD: 16
SOC: 09	EDU: 15	AIM: 11
COL: 10	LRN: 08	SPT: 11
ISH: 15	AGL: 17	LST: 13

Familiar with all basic combat skills, Thombo.
Experienced with Knife, Kick, all Athletic skills, Conceal Self, Silent Move.
Seasoned with Sword, First Aid, Track.

Yartell is one of the best swordsmen and trackers to come out of the Gauss Valley. He dedicated to his

current employer and will obey orders without question. He wears good quality clothing, a leather jerkin, and carries two swords across his back. He will use both weapons if pressed.

ARN CARTALE

CON: 12	STR: 10	SPD: 11
SOC: 15	EDU: 16	AIM: 12
COL: 10	LRN: 14	SPT: 13
ISH: 10	AGL: 13	LST: 11

Familiar with Sword, Knife, Crugar (spoken and etiquette), Horse, Thombo, History (classical), Geology (practical).
Experienced with Bargain, Bribe, Contacts, Fast Talk.

Arn is mean, depraved, and arrogant. He runs Relass like his own little kingdom and thinks that he can do anything he wants to do. He normally carries a knife, but has a two-handed sword and a suit of mail in his rooms. In an emergency he will use his three cleash capsules (sholari's choice).

SINTH

CON: 11	STR: 15	SPD: 18
SOC: 04	EDU: 12	AIM: 10
COL: 08	LRN: 14	SPT: 17
ISH: 10	AGL: 18	LST: 11

Familiar with Knife, Poison.
Experienced with Hak-Frist, Fist, Advance, Thrown Knife, Climb, Stalk.
Seasoned with Jump, Entangle.

Dysha of Desti (Experienced): Lightning Blast. Isho points available: 55.

Sinth is big for a crugar and knows it. He will use it to his advantage in combat, throwing knives from his bandoleer before jumping in with the hak-frist. He is well known for his hatred of woffen and will kill them at the slightest provocation, though not before 'playing' with the enemy.

AVERAGE CRUGAR

CON: 12	STR: 13	SPD: 15
AIM: 07	SPT: 15	ISH: 07
AGL: 15	LST: 15	

Familiar with Sword, all Athletics, Fist.

GUARD GRADE 1

CON: 12	STR: 15	SPD: 15
AIM: 13	SPT: 11	ISH: 10
AGL: 13	LST: 10	

Familiar with Knife or Thikes, Fist, Bow.
Experienced with Sword or Polearm.

GUARD GRADE 2

CON: 12	STR: 13	SPD: 11
AIM: 13	SPT: 11	ISH: 10
AGL: 12	LST: 10	

Familiar with Sword, Knife or Thikes, Fist.

GUARD GRADE 3

CON: 12	STR: 12	SPD: 11
AIM: 10	SPT: 08	ISH: 10
AGL: 10	LST: 10	

Familiar with Sword

Playtest Notes (Matthew Pook): The scenario went pretty much as planned. Barlin Brown, a boccord, found his parents kidnapped and the encounters on the Sarat and with Simmilar took place as described. Besides Barlin, the group consisted of Jowdii (a woffen), and Dern Voceridith (muadra, ex-caji infantry). Dern was the only PC to have been used previously - in the SkyRealm Kolovisondra adventure - and as a result of injuries sustained from jumping off a SkyRealm was suffering from amnesia. Instead of investigating too deeply the group headed south to Rhodu, only to be captured a month later on when they returned to Ardoth.

Upon arrival in Relass, Sinth killed Jowdii. The group was joined by Cerephenia (a blind muadra learsis) in their first escape attempt. Despite meeting up with a band of human travellers led by Kalin, they are re-captured by the crugar and returned to the mine. A second escape attempt was made the next day, but they only got as far as Cartale House, capturing Arn. Barlin killed him shortly thereafter. With Kalin's help they escaped both siege and town, and returned to Ardoth determined to stop whoever wass behind the slave trade.

The campaign was started about 1988 and involved three players and the Sholari (who for reasons too obscure to explain became known as 'the carrier bag'): Pete "Can I have a word with you?" Dewsberry (Barlin), Matt "Oh Dern you idiot, I'm blind" Channel (Jowdii and Cerephenia) and Matthew Pook (Dern). It later expanded to include Clive Emerson (Kalin), Martin "I've got an axe and I know how to use it" Sharland (Derma Morgranth, bronth Iscin and killing machine), and Simon "Mmmm, this afterbirth tastes delicious" Exton (Griosh, woffen scout). Further changes came as Sholari Alex Blair switched to different groups as well.

The campaign started on Eris 65, 3487, and the group did not return to Ardoth until Auss 3, 3487: 101 days in total. It took several weeks to play through the scenario, at about three hours per session, but got quite bogged down in the minutia of life.

From Ardoth the group became involved in the machinations of Sareess and his new bodyguard, Garth, to stop them revealing the truth, and later in the hunt for a hidden cache of Earth-tec.

HUMAN RELIGION ON JORUNE

by Bob Dushay

Author's Notes

I am a relative newcomer to Jorune, having arrived via the 3rd edition. I find the omission of human religions in this edition to be a major flaw in the game's background. Human religions may be found in the out of print Companion Ardoth, but development is sparse. There is some discussions of the watered down versions of Sho-Caudal worshipped by muadra and some humans, including a "weird, bastardised version of Sho-Caudal" called Dypra, which anthropomorphizes isho into a deity. For the rest of humanity religion is hardly taken seriously. In a nutshell, there are two religions focused on attitudes to Earth-tec: the Etton, who feel Earth is sacred and 'tec should not be used, and the Kerell, who use Earth-tec as a reminder of the glory of their ancestors. There is also Mundell, which is monotheistic and classifies all races as either being good or evil. Finally, Companion Ardoth allows that there are remnants of Terran religions, including elements of Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and so on. No human culture except for our very recent, 20th century Western one, exists without religion, and even modern secular America has a lot more religion than it pretends to (it is much more obvious when you come from a minority religious background, as I do). Furthermore, religion informs my moral decisions when I am playing a character. To take an obvious example, when is it okay to kill, and when should I spare my enemy? Is it okay to murder a helpless cleash, who would kill me in a minute if it could? What about a human foe who feels the same way? What is the basis for these decisions?

One could use the easy way out and simply translate the religions found today on Jorune, possibly mixing them together a bit, but I find this unsatisfactory. Aside from developing any necessary theological changes (and what faith would remain unchanged after spending nearly 3500 years on an alien world?), one also runs the risk of offending practitioners of those faiths in our own day.

I chose not to expand on the 'official' religions found in Companion Ardoth because I find them inadequate. Instead I have created a set of religions based on an imaginary, though plausible, faith that arises in our future that could easily have been transplanted to Jorune. I feel these religions can add life to a game, and provide the Sholari with a new set of tools. How would the Repenter settlement respond to the party? Will that large Preacher church in town welcome woffen?

Finally, I hope no-one takes offence at what I have written. These religions are imaginary, and I do not intend to insult anyone. If I have offended your beliefs, I apologise in advance. I would like to thank Joe Coleman, Owen Smith, Mark Hughes, and Paul Roberts for their spirited comments on the Jorune mailing list last year that sparked this article.

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An excerpt of the section on "Religion and Spiritualism" from the never completed 22nd Jorune Encyclopedia:

"The ecological crises of the early to mid 21st century Earth led to the popularity of the Gaian religion, with its preservationist sensibilities. While successful in changing attitudes to resource over-exploitation of the mother planet, the unprovable assertion that Earth was a single living organism made this faith just as unsuitable for those of a scientific bent as earlier faiths had been. The colonists on Jorune mainly hold atheistic technocratic beliefs and have little use for the religions that have divided Earth throughout its history."

Most humans who came to colonise Jorune put their trust into their own abilities and that of their technology, and had little use or need for religion. Over the centuries after the war with the shanthas, humans were forced to abandon both their technology and their beliefs in their ability to surmount any problem with sufficient study. Humans once more began to seek guidance in unseen powers greater than themselves. Earth assumed legendary and magical associations for the people who struggled to survive on an alien world, Pieces of the old Gaian faith surfaced once more to explain the difficult conditions humans now found themselves in, changed to suit the realities of a different world. Several Sects evolved, some of them conflicting with others.

THE REPENTERS

A common faith in the regions that later became Khodre, the Glounda, and Burdoth was that of the Repenters. The Repenter faith began within three centuries of the destruction of the colonies. Repenters believe that the shanthas were attuned to the Gaia-spirit of Jorune, while humans were invaders. The shanthas, living in harmony with Jorune, had attempted to educate humanity into proper coexistence with the planet. By invading territories forbidden them by the shanthas, humans had violated the trust of the planet, and thus their "fallen" state was justly deserved. Malnutrition and early death were simply facets of this fallen state.

Personal salvation ("forgiveness") could be found by adapting the shanthas lifestyle, and those who best imitated the shantha were believed to have healthier lives. The lack of correspondence between ritual purity and physical health soon led to a belief in reincarnation. Those who had reached a state of "full forgiveness" would be reincarnated as shanthas, while those who had not would return as humans until "their isho was purified". The essences of dead shanthas "rejoin the isho", becoming one with Jorune.

The Repenter faith did not remain popular when the more optimistic Salvationists arose, but it still exists, principally in pockets of North and South Khodre. They are a dour, conservative folk who live in underground dwellings in imitation of the shanthas. They dress as the shanthas do (men and women wear short baggy pants and women add halter tops; men shave their heads and women wear cloths over their hair) and the pious among them wear blindfolds when outdoors. The most devout blind themselves by staring at the sun. Outsiders are not welcome in their communities. Eating durlig is considered a reminder of the Jorune-spirit, and there are many rituals surrounding its harvest and consumption. Crethin leaves are not used to improve its taste, thus Repenters take little pleasure in their meals. Use of Earth-tec is completely forbidden, and recos are considered abominations.

Most non-human races are uninvolved in Repenter theology, but the Iscin Races are considered abominations, and believers will not have contact with them; they are forbidden to enter Repenter communities. The muadra are believed to be in a state of forgiveness between humans and shanthas because of their ability to use isho, while the boccord, for reasons of theological symmetry, are considered further from forgiveness than humans. Repenter theologians are divided as to whether boccord should be shunned lest their taint prove contagious, or whether they should be prosetylised to bring them to a state of forgiveness. It is extremely rare to find boccord or muadra believers among the Repenters. Encounters between Repenters and shantha are rare - Repenters rarely travel - and shantha do not seek them out. What the shanthas think of Repenters is unknown, but since the humans only imitate and cannot comprehend the true differences it is likely they find the Repenters pitiable.

Repenters are passive by nature and are rarely roused to more than muttered imprecations by the appearance of Earth-tec or Iscin Races. On the rare instance that their beliefs motivate them to commit crimes (such as destruction of Earth-tec or Iscin Race property) the yords and yorlissen are not sympathetic. In general, non-believer humans look down on the Repenters as backwards isolationists, sickly and foolish, and they are best left to their own devices.

THE SALVATIONISTS

Under unavoidable adversity humans either tend to accept their fate (as the Repenters did) or come to believe in rescue, no matter how unlikely. The Salvation faith rests on the proposition that the Star Dwellers will return and bring all of the stranded humans Home. By the time this religion became organised Earth was little more than a name to the descendants of the colonists. All Salvationists believe that humanity is destined to eventually return to Earth to dwell in peace and joy, but the faith is splintered into many sects, and the theological differences may even lead rival groups into physical conflict.

In spite of the large number of Salvationist sects the original version of the faith is still popular. Termed Unreconstructed Salvationism, or CSU (Church of Salvationists, Unreconstructed), they believe that humanity became arrogant about its ability to live without Gaia, and became cut off from Her when they came to Jorune. When the Mother Goddess finds humanity prepared (or sufficiently punished?) She will summon the peoples of Earth to return to Jorune in vast skyships to bring the humans Home. The faith teaches that Gaia hears the prayers of humanity, but their hearts must be true for Her to decide to bring them Home. Therefore, the CSU is in favour of increasing human

populations all over the planet (so that their prayers will be louder for Gaia to hear) and for people to be true of heart. Services involve reading a great deal of verse about how wonderful Earth is. As a corollary, the CSU preaches goodness and kind works to inspire good fellowship among humans. The religion generally teaches obedience to authority, as organised societies have louder prayers than disorganised ones.

Unlike the Repenters, who believe life on Jorune in a punishment, Unreconstructed Salvationists believe that humanity erred in abandoning Gaia and that Jorune humans are simply "lost" to Her. Other races are neither more or less important than humans. The CSU is thus neutral regarding thriddle and shanthas, but somewhat hostile to ramian and cleash as these races kill humans, thereby preventing them from spreading across the planet. Boccord and muadra are considered human, though isho use is considered impure; "Gaia does not hear the prayers of the caji or hishtin" is a well known saying. The Iscin Races are considered pitiable mistakes, as they are intelligent and of Earth descent, but cannot ever know the joy of salvation back to Earth. The CSU is fairly common in Burdoth and Heridoth, especially in rural areas. As may be expected, human rulers find that this faith leads to political stability, and it is often encouraged.

A minor sect that split off from the CSU is that of the Simonaries. The sect's origins lie in the mystic visions of a Simon Culler, who taught that Earth is a planet much like Jorune and the people there are just plain, everyday folk. The important difference is that all animals and plants there are edible, without the need to labour for durlig or take hilc. The ease of getting food on Earth means that work is unnecessary there. The Simonaries give Gaia a less central role in their faith; they simply direct their prayers to Her to notify the people of Earth to send great skyships to return the people Home. This faith is considered childlike and naive by most, and believers are often called "Simples" or "Simple Simons". The latter term is considered particularly insulting by the faithful. The dismissive nickname in not inappropriate however, as the Simonaries are prone to believe that all of Jorune's ills can be solved by prayer, meditation, and telepathy to summon the Star Dwellers of Earth.

The largest split in the Salvationist faith is the belief as to whether Earth is simply a material place or a spiritual one. The CSU teaches that Earth is simply another physical place, albeit a blessed one. The Reconstructed Salvationists believe that Earth is a spiritual paradise and that one gets there through spiritual means, save for the Time of Salvation when all souls will return to Earth. Most Reconstructionists believe in reincarnation and that souls are judged at the moment of conception. "Perfected" souls are sent to Earth, while "imperfect" ones are incarnated on Jorune for further lessons.

The split from the CSU meant that unity within the Reconstructed church was impossible to maintain. Every major theological disagreement led to the founding of a new church. Thus, different denominations of the Reconstructed Salvationists flourish across the lands of Jorune. Space precludes listing all the different branches, but some of the more important groups are given below.

One of the major splinter groups is the Preachers. The official teaching of the church is that Gaia sent humanity away from Her because they were incapable of living on Her in harmony. The Preachers prosetylise others aggressively, because all humanity must accept their teachings before the Time of Salvation can occur. Some sects of the Preachers believe that the route to Salvation requires that all peoples live together in harmony. These Preachers promote non-violence. They are divided about non-humans. Some argue that non-humans are a test, and they must be included in the general harmony. Others believe non-humans don't count. and suppression of the non-humans is permissable, so long as humans remain in harmony. There are many shades of opinion inbetween, and the prevailing consensus is that non-hostile non-humans, such as thriddle, woffen, bronth, shanthas, and corastin should be included in harmony, while the generally hostile races such as ramian and cleash should be suppressed to enhance the general peace. As may be expected, it is hard to predict how crugar would be treated.

Other Preachers believe that harmony refers to the ability to live in harmony with the planet. These groups struggle toward the ideal of "living on the planet, not *off* it", meaning that only renewable resources should be used, and all human activity should be sustainable without damaging the planet. As such, metals are generally eschewed save for those ores easily accessible from the surface. In practice this means that metals must be "blessed", approved by a priest, before it may be used. Blessed metals are marked with a special stamp. Needless to say there is considerable corruption around the

decision as to whether an item is blessed or not and it often has an influence on the price (the mark is sometimes faked by smiths or sellers). Believers try to live simply and wealth for its own sake id frowned upon.

The Second Chance denomination believes that Gaia sent humans to Jorune, after they had nearly killed Earth with pollution and exploitation, to see if they had learned their lesson. When they have proved that they can live on a planet without destroying it they will be returned to Earth. A darker sect of this group holds that the humans left behind on Earth all died off, and that Jorune is where the faithful are allowed to live while Gaia prepares Earth for their return to a cleansed planet. Unlike the Preachers, Second Chancers do not believe Jorune has a Gaia-like spirit, and the planet should be used as a testing ground to learn how to live harmoniously. To outsiders there is little to choose between the groups, but the two denominations hate each other with great passion.

A minor Reconstructed Salvationist denomination is the Perfectionists, who believe that humans were sent away from Gaia because they were "incomplete" and imperfect. The Time of Salvation will occur when humans become "perfected". Unlike the Preachers, Perfectionists feel that they are more effective at creating this state by serving as good examples to others than by proselytising. Perfectionists are relatively rare but are found in all major human areas. They are non-violent, charitable, and solid citizens, although they will refuse to obey laws they consider immoral. Perfectionists usually avoid politics, which they find intrinsically degrading.

Regarding non-humans, the Reconstructed Salvationists usually have no official theological position. Often it is up to the individual congregation as to how other races will be treated. Some churches welcome the muadra, boccord, and Iscin Races without comment, others subtly discourage their participation while having no stated policy, while others actively preach against the Iscin Races as a further example of humans meddling with natural forces.

THE ACTIVISTS

The most recent major faith (beginning around 2700 PC), Activism comes closest to the technocratic beliefs of the original colonists. The central tenet if the faith is that humans are responsible for their fate, and that the Deity will not intervene directly in human affairs. Activist clergy are trained in seminaries in several cities and different seminaries have different interpretations of Activist teachings. All denominations are vague about the Deity, which is never represented pictorially, and all agree that intelligent life is more important than non-intelligent life, and that technological progress is good, but beyond these basic points there are many disagreements. The most fundamental spilt is over the ultimate goal of humanity. The majority of the Activist denominations (including those priests trained in the Ardoth seminary) believe it is the duty of humans to make Jorune as much like Earth as possible ("Like Earth on Jorune" is a famous quote. A minority of denominations (including the Meard seminary) believe that humans have the duty to return to Earth, so they should be learning how to master Earth-tec and build better skyships to return Home. This teaching ('Meard Activism') tends to be more popular in smaller communities, or for groups with little political power.

The Salvationists find the Activist faith to be blasphemous, considering it an arrogant assembly of would-be deities. The Activists consider the Salvationists backwards and superstitious. There were religious wars between the groups 500 years ago, but in modern times the two groups agree to disagree, save for a few fanatics on both sides.

NATIONAL RELIGIONS: THANTIER AND JASP

Thantier developed a unique culture as a result of their retention of Earth-tec after the war with the shantha and their isolation from other surviving human groups. It did not take long for Thantierians to develop an attitude of superiority over the other starving pockets of humans, and the feudal form of governance they developed led to an intensely conservative mindset. Over the centuries, familial pride eventually turned into a form of ancestor worship. An interesting feature of this religion is that whose ancestors one worships depends on your social class and who you owe allegiance to. This ancestor worship dovetails with the monotheistic Pluran religion, although it is unusual for a Thantierian to follow one and not the other.

The lowest class tenant farmers and peasants worship either the family deities of their landlords, or the family that the landlords owe allegiance to. The higher you are on the social ladder the more of

your own ancestors appear in your family shrine. If you are one of the ruling families, you only worship your own ancestors. If the family also follows the teachings of Pluran, their ancestors are considered intercessionaries with 'The Imperator', the otherwise unnamed deity of Pluran.

Each family maintains a shrine to the set of ancestors they pray to. There is no set number of ancestors one should have represented in the shrine; numbers typically vary from four to twelve. Greater or lesser numbers are unusual but not unheard of. Ancestors are often represented by small statuettes, but abstract representations are also common: coloured stones, a piece of crystal, a piece of smooth wood, a stone. Greater wealth leads to more impressive and expensive representations. The Imperator is always represented by a featureless cylinder of stone.

Pluran teaches that The Imperator decreed all humans will be the only intelligent race upon Jorune. Non-humans are to be suppressed. Some priests of Pluran preach for the extermination of non-humans, while others teach that the non-humans will die off in the face of superior humanity. All teach contempt for the 'thones'.

Ancestor worship reinforces the conservative Thantierian culture of codes of honour and responsibility to one's family and one's betters. Thantierians consider a dishonourable act to be stain upon their family, and hence their 'gods'. Needless to say, the lower social classes have fewer of their own ancestors in their shrines, and feel breaches of the honour code less keenly. This in turn reinforces the prejudices of the upper classes against the poor.

Ancestor worship does not have a name. It is such a fundamental part of Thantierian society that it cannot be separated from it and given a separate name. True believers in Pluran give little emphasis to the worship of their ancestors, but almost never ignore them. Pluran priests are the exception to this rule. Upon investiture as a priest, a man surrenders his ancestry to become "descendant of The Imperator". He no longer has ancestors between him and the transcendence of his god. It is far more common to find people who worship their ancestors as the only deities of consequence, and completely ignore The Imperator, although they share the pro-human world view of the Pluran faith.

There are no separate churches or temples for Pluran or ancestor worship; all is done within the home. Pluran priests are supposed to wander Thantier, teaching to the faithful and aiding private prayers. in practice they tend to settle in the homes of the wealthy faithful, where they provide an aura of blessedness in exchange for comfortable shelter. There are also wandering 'diviners' who serve the needs of those who do not follow Pluran. Diviners interpret omens, officiate when a new ancestor is added to the shrine (but not when one os removed: the obsolete representation is solemnly buried by the family), and bless new-borns in the name of their ancestors. Pluran priests feel diviners intrude on their business, and their is some hostility between the two professions.

The Jaspians, on the other hand, have Nama, the official state religion, which worship the right tutelary deities. In spite of the official support for Nama very few people take it seriously. Even the priestesses mostly consider Name merely a framework for good works such as caring for the elderly, sick, poor, refugees, and hungry, and true believers are subtly isolated.

The eight deities of Nama each have their own spheres of influence: Maidor, the goddess of the sea and weather; Puthwill, the god of cleverness and war; Dammano, the god of crops and farming; Kerrick, the master of stones and building; Shodo, the god of isho and unpredictability; Hallerood, the Lady of the Hearth; Beg, goddess of health and healing; and Tig, the Luckchanger. Small carved representations of the appropriate deities can be found almost everywhere: sea vessels of every kind have a Maidor idol carved into the bow (the famous Jaspian crystal skyships are also overseen by Maidor), city gates always have a Kerrick face in their stonework, houses have Hallerood carved over the fireplace or in the kitchen, and so on. Small sacrifices to the Eight are made on official holidays, but in general there is little overt religious behaviour. The Jaspians tend to be a tolerant folk, and they tolerate other religious practices in their country with good cheer.

There are many more religions on Jorune, but these are the major ones. It should be added that some humans worship in the Cult of Mayatrish, although this is more a religion of boccord or muadra, and others attempt to follow the teachings of Sho-Caudal, although without genuine Tra-sense this faith is mostly hollow ritual and empty teachings for humans.

THE POLITICS OF BURDOTH, Part III
The Chell, The Dharsage, His Wife, and Their Cousins

In many ways this is the most straight-forward of the three articles, summarizing material from published and out-of-print sources to give a clearer picture of the Dharsage, Chell, the Burdothian military, the legal system, and other sundry concerns.

INTRODUCTION

Without a doubt, the single most important figure in Burdothian politics is the Dharsage, the ruler of the Realm; but that is not the whole story. Burdoth's Dharsage[1] is described as "...[ruling] as a king, but with limited powers". In fact the Dharsage is something of a hybrid of feudal king and republican president; the Dharsage has the kingly powers of granting significant patronage at home and abroad, the one-man diplomacy, and the control of the military. The office is more presidential when we see the division between domestic and foreign policy, and the Ardothian system of checks and balances. Within Ardoth's walls the Chell (mayor) is the supreme authority, the Ardothian Council (or Council of Ten, as it is also called) is there to "...keep an eye on the Dharsage", and the Kims also wield influence in civic affairs. Khodre Dhardrenn is most powerful in foreign policy, that is to say he is least-hindered outside Ardoth, and so that's where we'll turn our attention first.

THE DHARSAGE AND THE MILITARY

Broadly speaking "The Dharsage [manages] the defence of the city's ex-perimeter, and the Chell [is] responsible for the defence and management of the city". This means that *anything* strictly outside Ardoth is the Dharsage's concern, and especially if it impacts on the interests of Burdoth. The Shendarri SkyRealm, the shirm-eh trade, and the rumoured starcraft operation are some of Dhardrenn's pet projects. In this he is enthusiastically supported by the military, and the Ardothian Guard in particular.

We know a few things about the 'Red Capes': they "...act as the Dharsage's personal bodyguards and oversee his special projects"[2], they "...choose their own"[3], and they are comprised of 1,000 elite men and women. The Guard are split into 10-man 'work teams' and 100-man 'battlegroups'. Each team is a self-contained operating cell who answers directly to the Dharsage or (when in Ardoth) to the Citadel Cabal Jerman Tobias. I'll return to the Guard proper in a moment, but Jerman Tobias deserves a little attention. It is not a well known name in Burdoth or beyond, but as leader of the "scalpel's razor" of military legions the man must be powerful indeed. In fact I'd go so far as to say that Tobias is likely to be Dhardrenn's main man when it comes to espionage, counter-insurgency, and assassination (perish the thought!). In other words, Tobias is the head of the Joruni CIA.

The Ardothian Guard does have a force of 200 to 300 troops who are the "covert operations unit" and we must remember that their "...methods and intentions are often hard to predict, but [their] power should not be underestimated". It is also worth noting that the Guard were created in response to foreign pressure: "When Khodre [Allonkarb, Dhardrenn's father] returned, frustrated by the Klein-Khodre Accord, he used these soldiers as the core of an elite unit." The creation of the Ardothian Guard was thus a wilful attempt to circumvent the Council of Ten and to operate without scrutiny. The Red Capes are ultra-nationalists, loyal unto death, and one of the best weapons at Dhardrenn's disposal. Whether they have agendas of their own isn't clear, but note that "The new openness encouraged by Dhardrenn [eg. public displays of Earth-tec...has them especially jumpy"[4]. Ardothian Guards aside, the Dharsage also commands another 43,000 professional soldiers to do his bidding, which on Jorune is a significant force, to say the very least.

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[1] The term Dharsage refers to the office held by Khodre Dhardrenn, rather than the ruling class of Burdoth as a whole (as it appears in some of the old material, notably glossaries from "White Wolf" magazine).

[2] From previous footnote quotations taken from 3rd edition, pp.200-201.

[3] Companion Jorune: Burdoth, p.50

[4] From previous footnote quotations taken from Companion Jorune: Ardoth, p.34 and p.35.

FOREIGN APPOINTMENTS AND THE ARDOTHIAN COUNCIL

The appointment of Lystra (county rulers) and Sages (province rulers) is the responsibility of the Dharsage. Lystra do not carry much political weight[5]. Concerning Sages, "Each appointment must be approved by the Chell of the region. This is a formality to appease the Council; Khodre's appointments are seldom challenged". Although "Each province is largely self governing and should be kept so in the eyes of the Council", Khodre's "...control extends to all four Burdothian provinces". In fact the Dharsage can manipulate the Council in significant ways, particularly as four of the Ardothian Council are hand-picked by Khodre himself[6]. Of course this doesn't necessarily mean that they can always be counted on, but note that Tintle Barbayn, the representative from the Sobayid "...succeeded Laimberlayn Sotiff, who was forced out after not siding with the Dharsage in a key council vote in 3474"[7].

The Ardothian Council was created after the Energy Weapons War to "...restrict the aggressions of the Dharsage and those of the allied forces of Dobre and Lundere"[8], and it's purpose is also to "...allow the various realms and provinces representation in political decision making"[9], but it appears that it must work hard and long to make any gains against the Dharsage[10]. Khodre has such disdain for its meetings that he often sends a proxy, and his father always "...[considered] the council idea ineffective"[11]. This isn't a Joruni U.N., nor even a second executive chamber, and the Council could only put its full weight behind the most serious of issues. As a cog in the checks and balances system it is deeply flawed. It can act independently in some non-political jurisdictions; it was a Council-empowered team who investigated the Hobeh ruins in 3491 for example.

A WORD ABOUT THRIDDLE

Just how much influence the thriddle have in human affairs isn't clear (it never is!). Thanks to Stanra So-Gomo all thriddle were expelled from Ardoth in 3470. They returned five years later to help investigate the Warp Flash, and Kirra Ho-Trid resumed his position as advisor to Khodre Dhardrenn. Ho-Trid's influence has been strong in the past, playing Aristotle to Khodre's Alexander the Great by directing his attention to scholarly works on politics and philosophy; in fact "This reading influenced Khodre Dhardrenn to make radical changes in the 3460s"[12]. How much Khodre listens to Ho-Trid 30 years later is debatable. Salrough Gomo mediates between governments of course, but he hasn't been to Ardoth in years as far as I can tell. The only other thriddle to be a major political player, Klein Ko-Trid, has retired to Ehvans and has little contact with Ardoth. Demmil Ho-Trin is the Tan Iricid representative on the Council, and he is said to be vigorous even at 198 years old.

ARDOTHIAN NOBLES

In an earlier article I reiterated the fact that powerful Ardothian families command much political power. Unfortunately we don't know much detail about them[13]. The Khardarren family are powerful strategists and tacticians in the service of the Dharsage, the DharWin are xenophobic and fabulously wealthy, the D'Serris are Ardothians with equally influential branches in the Khodres, and the Dharmery grew to such an extent that they rival the Dharsage for sheer political clout. Perhaps it was a great family behind the attempted assassination of Dhardrenn in 3489? It would not be inconceivable

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[5] "None of these appointments means very much." Companion Jorune: Burdoth, p.5. Until next footnote all quotations taken from this source.

[6] Represented on the Council are: Ardis, Tan-Iricid, Dobre, Lundere, North & South Khodre, Lusail. Gauss Valley, the Sobayid, Temauntro, Heridoth, and an occasional Ramian from Voligire.

[7] Companion Jorune: Ardoth, p.13. Pages 12-13 of this supplement contain extremely useful notes on all ten members of the Ardothian Council.

[8] Companion Jorune: Ardoth, p.34

[9] Companion Jorune: Burdoth, p.5

[10] The only major one that springs to mind is the halting of shirm-eh trading with the Ramian.

[11] Sholari's Companion, p.30

[12] Companion Jorune: Ardoth, p.30

[13] Revered Ardothian families invert fore and surnames, eg. Smith John rather than John Smith, and before the Dharsage was a hereditary (pre-3305) title the chell would choose a Dharsage from the noble families.

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that Dhardrenn's wife (Rolesia Mincarra) and his sons (Dharmar, Rhalter, and Jerdan) also carry great weight in the capitol. To that one may add any number of cousins, concubines, and courtiers that could bend someone's ear in one way or another. The difficulty is that their influence will rarely be official, and is thus hard to trace.

THE CHELL

It is important to realise that the office of the Chell is not what it used to be. Indeed, "The power of the chell began dwindling around the time of the Energy Weapons War...as military strength became Ardoth's key to survival and expansion"[14]. Before the rise of hereditary Dharsage rule it was actually the Chell's responsibility to nominate the Dharsage, with the approval of the Council of Kims. But, for the last 200 years or so the Dharsage has assumed supremacy, and is now the one to select the Chell[15]. The Chell does not even have an Office of Investigation (which can look into "...possible wrong-doing of any Dharsage agent [and] makes recommendations to the Council of Kims"); this function belongs to the Dharsage offices, and perhaps Jerman Tobias. Also, the Burdothian military meddles in the city itself; the Second Engineer Legion have "...reportedly rigged the bridges across the Cryshell for quick destruction".

However - like the membership of the Ardothian Council - this does not mean that the Chell is a slave. Rhan Trohan, Ardoth's current office-holder, must tread carefully but should be expected to exercise a degree of autonomy and power. The Chell nominates the members of the Keshtica Yordica (the 'supreme court'), will "...usurp the Kims if orders are given the yords that are contrary to...city policy", and in almost all areas the "...Chell's orders take precedence"[16] when they conflict with another's. Further, any civic job will be granted through the Office of Appointments, and there is also considerable room for manoeuvre through the Offices of Accounting, Higher Law, Licences, Transportation, and Yords.

The Office of the Yords is interesting because there is a hint that, under the Chell, they are very watchful indeed. Consider that "Drenn are rarely incarcerated for crimes, usually they are held if it is suspected they *will* commit a crime", and one begins to see how the yords may operate. Also, "Calprins (investigators)...can move through their sections to gather evidence and build cases"[17]. Is this simply an effective police force, or a city department poised to frame political enemies and other undesirables? If we don't believe that all Drenn are avuncular do-gooders, can we maintain an image of happy-chappy, tourist-friendly yords?[18]

DRENN AND KESHT

Speaking of Drenn, there is more evidence that the Dharsage is in control: "The tauther/drenn system changed hands from Chell to Dharsage after the Energy Weapons War, as drennship became an institution of the Realm"[19]. We all know why Drenn are important to Dhardrenn by now, don't we? Concerning Kesht, "Drenn do not apply for Kesht, they are nominated by Kesht for the privilege". It would be naive to think that pure merit was the only determinant in Kesht selection, and note that "These points are not formally tallied, but the Central Kim manages to keep track of such things"[20]; presumably via the same yords that keep their eyes peeled for law-breakers of any stripe. So not only are Ardoth's githerin spied on, but so are its leaders-to-be. A final note on Kesht: it is they who approve the members of the Keshtica Yordica in a public vote. Yordica places are held for life, which may be significant if they can avoid the Fusheen Klade (assassins). A life-member of an institution is free from certain considerations that plague those in elected-office, ie. re-election.

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[14] Companion Jorune: Ardoth, p.32

[15] "Ardoth's governing is the responsibility of the Chell, who is appointed by the Dharsage." Companion Jorune: Burdoth, p.6

[16] From previous footnote quotations taken from Companion Jorune: Ardoth, pp.30-34.

[17] Both quotations taken from 3rd edition, p.200-201.

[18] Oh yes, Cynic is my middle name.

[19] Companion Jorune: Ardoth, p.30

[20] Both quotations taken from 3rd edition, p.201.

KIMS AND KIMMITS

Ardoth's basic political organisation is the kimmit (small council). Members of kimmits must be Drenn, and each kimmit contributes a member to the larger Kim (neighbourhood council). In like fashion, each of Ardoth's 23 Kims contribute a member to the Council of Kims, or the Central Kim as it is also known. Kims and kimmits arbitrate local disputes, try diyorda (criminals) for petty crimes, and maintain essential services in their jurisdiction. Punishments are usually work-sentences or time in the herris (jail). Serious crimes are dealt with by the Chell-appointed yorlissen (judges). The Kims thus have a lot of influence locally, a voice in city-wide affairs, and a slight influence on larger policy decisions (through the Council of Kims). Theoretically the Chell answers to the Central Kim, but in practice he is its guiding force.

CONCLUSION

At the top of this article I said it was simplistic to say the Dharsage was a king in the true sense, and he is also more than a "...popularly supported executive branch with limited policy making powers"[21]. The office of the Dharsage is limited by the Ardothian Council and the Chell in an imperfect checks and balances system, he has carte-blanche in foreign policy (literally the Commander-in-Chief of the best fighting force on the planet), and is a social-engineer with the foresight to use the old Drenn system to his advantage. Less formal restraint is provided by the thriddle, and Dhardrenn's half-sister Saress (who controls the Khodres). He is also blocked at times by the klades and other foreign nations he cannot control. The Chell, with a firmer grip on civic matters, is the second most powerful man in Burdoth. Both have hidden means to achieve their ends.

Throughout this series of articles I've tried to expose the politics of Burdoth and show that there is more to these institutions than the apportionment of challisk marks and blasters. At the same time I also feel that there is lots of role-playing potential in a more gritty/less idealistic vision of Burdothian society. It's time we put some colour back into those Men in Grey.

SUMMARY OF DHARSAGE AND CHELL OFFICES

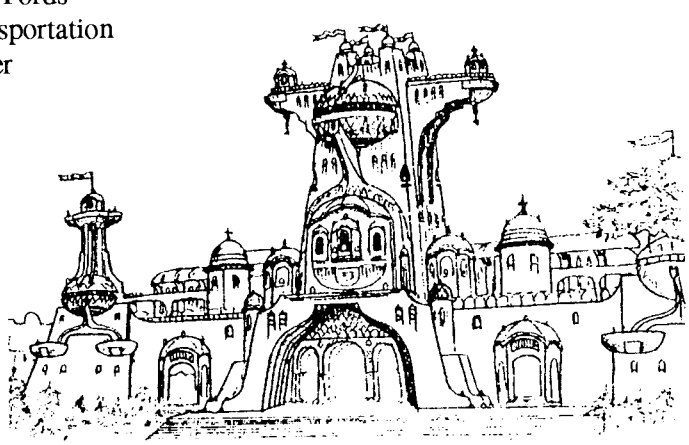
DHARSAGE

Adjustment
Appointment
Cletch
Council Relations
Councillors
Earth-tec
Energy Weapons
Finance
Investigation
Klade Relations
Relocation
The Chell
The Daijic
The Realm
War

CHELL

Abandonment
Accounting
Appointments
Building
City Relations
Cletch
Higher Law
Klade Relations
Libraries
Postal Service
Licences
Maintenance
Port Services
Sanitation
Standards
The Yords
Transportation
Water

Palace of Dharsage Khodre Dhardrenn in Ardoth



[21] Companion Ardoth, p.30

PASS THE GIGGIT PIPE

Thanks again to all the erstwhile scribblers. I've incorporated Notes & Querrids into the letter column, but I don't know if this will be a permanent fixture or not. Bear in mind that in all my replies I'm not necessarily saying that I have the right or definitive answer, and you should not hesitate to take me to task or pick up the thread of discussion in the next issue. We kick off with some unfinished business concerning the Drenn system, which came in just a little too late to be included in issue 2.

Bob Dushay, New Jersey
I don't feel the Drenn are a leisured class, and I think they would work and join the klades just like anyone else...your thinking is on the mark on two points: that only Drenn may own land, and that the majority of the city population cannot be Drenn. I had not previously realised that this meant that other economic forces must necessarily pay rent to the Drenn...unless there is some other factor involved, such as the majority of the land actually being city-owned or held in common. It is also possible that organizations, such as the klades, may own land, but Drenn are the only individuals permitted to do so.

Yes, I'd say that Drenn are the only members of society that can own land as individuals, but bear in mind that the authorities can take it away again, at which point it reverts to the State. There are plenty of groups in Ardoth that own their own chunks of real estate - the klades and the DharWin family for example. No doubt Khodre would want to get his hands on some of this. There is also the possibility that Drenn may push for inheritance laws, ensuring their families and descendants keep a given property once the Drenn has passed away (the challisks of deceased Drenn are planed away and re-used). Also, are the Drenn parcelled out a chunk of land or does Drennship merely grant the right to petition the Chell to buy a property? We are told that a Drenn must maintain his land or it "...will be reassigned" (3rd ed. p.201), which implies the former. I don't think that Drenn would be klade members, and my arguments for that were evident in issue 2.

Bob Dushay
I cannot be sure that the Drenn system advances military types. I was under the impression that explorers and seekers after knowledge would become Drenn. I can see why classical Iscin would disdain becoming Drenn, but the outdoor Iscin might be more interested. In fact, part of the reason I like Jorune is this game mechanism that gives players a reason to simply explore without needing to kill monsters and gain treasure and experience points. If enough people in the military apply for Drennship, then would military service alone be good enough to grant it? I suspect many, even in the military, are just as happy to live as toth, and not have to worry about the requirements of Drennship. Politicians gain rewards in our society, but how many people are actually willing to go through the process to become one, in spite of all the grumbling?

All military personnel are registered as Tauther whether they wish to proceed in tothis or not. The ambitious soldier will make sergeant to help himself with the Drenn Test, or vice-versa. The gun skills are hard to acquire elsewhere. Drennship may be political, but that doesn't mean all Drenn are politicians; I guess that is the real province of Kesht, and a Drenn is free to be active in his local Kim or not (of course, they can't lay around on their behinds all of the time). Mike Tittensor had an idea that involved 'fast track' and 'slow track' Tauther, the idea being that PCs were the high flyers of Burdoth and that most other Tauther were doing little more than serving their time in Chell organised projects; the 'slow trackers' may have to wait 10 or 15 years for full Drenn status, while the PCs are aiming at a two to three year timescale.

Bob Dushay
I don't think the politics of Burdoth are as stratified as you paint them...You say the klades should oppose the Drenn system because it is an economic drain on them. I say maybe the klades can own their own land, or that the rent is regulated to be very reasonable. You feel the Drenn are a leisured class, living off the sweat of those below, while I feel like the Drenn are more like the upper middle class, working at better jobs than most but working nonetheless (with some extra income from rents). You feel the Drenn are mostly ex-military sabre-rattlers, while I feel they are more a mix of merchants, explorers, and others who build the knowledge base.

I didn't intend my discussion to form rigid

barriers around Burdothian institutions. In fact I think they fight wars on many fronts and one could expect the usual round of deal making, shifting alliances, and vested interest groups that marks any political endeavour. I say the klades should oppose the Drenn system because the architects of that system are opposed to the klades. I doubt that the Dharsage is keen to be reasonable about klade rents. I may have pushed the 'leisured class' thing a little far, because I think Drenn can be all the things described above; but the deck is stacked toward well-connected powermongers and those born to the social elite. To paraphrase William Plunkett - nothing makes a man so patriotic as a pocketful of money. If the scientists and the translators get involved, all the better, but the system could roll along quite nicely without them.

Bob Dushay

My own digging through the 2nd edition and the Sholari guide led me to wonder exactly how the Burdothian legal system works. It appears that Kims make and enforce the laws, but these can only be neighbourhood based. How does this work with the Chell? If every neighbourhood makes its own laws, it's chaos! The klades also seem to have oligarchic economic power, so that they would stretch across Kim boundaries, maybe even across entire states. This makes Kims almost analogous to modern nations, with the klades the equivalent of multi-national corporations. Even the Dharsage would have to be a bit careful around the klades, because they wield economic power and cannot easily be replaced...they are reminiscent of medieval guilds. In the absence of military threats, they'll eventually undermine the Dharsage's power, won't they?

The Chell has jurisdiction over city-wide affairs and the Kims deal with local issues as well as trying and sentencing diyorda for petty crimes. Most trials are conducted by Chell-appointed yorlissen. Kims also boss Drenn around, and although they give orders to neighbourhood yords they (the yords) ultimately answer to the Chell. Appeals and high crimes are dealt with by the Keshtica Yordica. See 3rd edition p.200-201 for an overview of the legal system, and the Politics of Burdoth Part III. I see kims and kimmits as more like reservations or modern ethnic neighbourhoods, with sovereignty in a few key areas. As Abraham Lincoln once said "Organised chaos is the only method".

Oh yes, certain klades have influence far and wide, and the Dharsage has to tread carefully while still keeping them in their place. Will the klades undermine the Dharsage's power? Sure, but they still want a prosperous Burdothian state, or they couldn't make any moolah. There are tussles going on all over the place - Dharsage vs klades, Chell vs Kims, Drenn vs toth, Shen vs Chell, Dharsage vs Council of Ten, and so on. Isn't it fun?

Matthew Pook, Falmouth

Some Jorune miniatures would be nice. One thought occurs to me: what do people wear? All right, thombo armour is common, but what else? It might be worth an article. Not one for me to do as my fashion sense is lousy.

I've tried using figures from other ranges: AD&D thri-keen make decent scarmis, sliggs will do for corastin, and I have some organic looking manta-ray type spaceships that I always claim are daij (never used them in a scenario though). I guess people wear cotton, simra-vintch, a variety of leathers (lothern, clemmisin, et al) , crystal ornamentation, other kinds of trinkets and trophies, buckles, challisks of course, klade patches, soft headgear (got to have neck protection in the Sobayid), pieces of Earth-tec if they can be found or afforded, loose clothes to aid speedy kerning, and maybe some kind of overalls in Ardoth to provide some protection against the high winds. The Sholari's Companion lists about 40 items of clothing, though there is little indication of style or appearance (we do know that the Ardoth Guard favour scarlet, black, and rust coloured garments, and that regular legions are in red and grey). I have a friend studying fashion & design at Southampton; maybe I can interest her in a commission...

Matthew Pook

Here are a few suggestions as to what the average Ardothian labourer might wear: depending on the weather either a loincloth or trews of thombo hide, lined if s/he can afford it; barefoot or sandals, the soles of boiled hide; a cloth shirt or if the work involves carrying heavy weights, a hide jerkin; headgear that covers the mouth with a veil to protect against heat and dust; if the work involves lifting and carrying then a pannier. S/he may have access to better clothing, but that depends upon wealth and status.

Most illustrations have half dressed figures, and I always envisaged Burdoth and the lands south of it as having pretty warm climates. I shouldn't imagine full armour of whatever design is worn as everyday dress (in Ardoth a sidearm is permissable in one's own neighbourhood) and remember that closed-helms are rare on Jorune.

Matthew Pook

Why is there no religion in SoJ? A quick rundown of religions of Earth include Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. That gives you five umbrellas under which you have a lot of variants, and this does not include other faiths. I may be agnostic but I still want to know about them because what has that poor peasant farmer got otherwise? He works a lot in the fields (or wherever), procreates, pays his taxes, and dies? Wow, what a life! That may have been fine in the dark ages, but I think that even a peasant farmer is going to have some kind of aspirations, hopes, and

dreams. Religion has and can provide this for people - something to look forward to: the afterlife.

All the religions you mention are on Jorune in one form or another, and read the others that Bob details in this issue. The lot of the peasant farmer you describe is just as applicable to the modern factory worker or white collar dogsbody; and Jorune is in a dark ages of sorts, or at least emerging from one. I dislike the concept of religion as a way to get one's just reward for a shitty mortal existence: that is a control mechanism used throughout history to keep people quiet.

Owen Smith, Cambridge

The SoJ community does not exist solely on the internet, but it's damned convenient. We are currently discussing muadra/human/boccord interbreeding (or not) and DNA, plus the orbital mechanics of the moons and why they don't work. The net works better than anything else I know for this sort of discussion. To clear something up, you do NOT need £1000 worth of top end PC. Your scrotty 386 would be adequate. You'd need a 9K6, 14K4 or 28K8 modem (second hand £100 and £170 respectively), a phone line, £10 per month plus VAT to Demon Internet or similar, some software (the free stuff works quite well) and you're in business. If you do e-mail only the phone bill might be 3 minutes local call per day. It's not very expensive all things considered.

I'm not denying that the net is the things you claim, I'm saying that it isn't available to everyone as easily one would like. I asked two programmers I know and they reckoned - from scratch - that it would cost between £400 and £500 if you were lucky on the second hand market; perhaps less if you just wanted e-mail. I went to my local microstore and found that complete net access is available for £79.99 and £10.53 rental per month - if you buy one of their computers. The cost of that computer? £999.99. Few people I know have even £400 that they don't need elsewhere, and how many people would have access if they didn't get it free through college or university? I know one BF reader finds the phrase 'snail-mail' particularly insulting, and we've both had trouble getting replies from companies and individuals through regular channels. I'd absolutely love e-mail and net access; a £10 monthly rental is probably less than I currently spend on stamps and I rely on the net-by-proxy for large amounts of invaluable information I wouldn't otherwise be privy to. Below are some further points raised in "Imazine" on this topic.

Paul Mason, Japan

It's quite possible that the relatively small number of fanzines around is partly due to the Usenet. Many of the people who would normally be expressing their argumentative natures in the pages of a fanzine are siphoned off into newsgroups. Increasingly, the Net community is starting to acquire an exclusive mentality. People are forgetting that there are those who are not connected - that there are those, indeed, who do not even possess a computer. This is why I persist in publishing a paper fanzine. The Usenet has its uses, but...I'm starting to wonder about the wisdom of doing an electronic version of the zine. All that fussing about with HTML seems to be something of a waste of my time. I wouldn't mind so much if it led to a flood of contributors, but I'm realising that most inhabitants of the Netscape eschew traditional forms of communication and intercourse.

I should point out that "Imazine" is available to be downloaded before it ever appears on paper. You can get Paul's zine from http://www.tcp-ip.or.jp/~panurge.

Graham Slarke, Huddersfield

Concerning the Seven Wonders of Jorune, at least one of the others must be SkyRealms, maybe that one the Dharsage keeps his Earth-tec on.

I guess the problem is (a) the Wonders of Jorune comment may have been a throwaway one, and (b) most of Jorune's impressive features are inaccessible to the general public, such as the Shendarri SkyRealm you mention, the lamorri ruins in Ros Crendor, and the huge warp to Voligire.

Bob Dushay

I thought your comments on the 3rd edition character generation vs 2nd edition were rather well done. I looked at them both somewhat closely...after reading your article, and I think the 3rd edition SoJ rules owe quite a bit to the same phenomenon that changed D&D's old 3d6 system to AD&D's 4d6-d6. Players just don't feel secure without most of their stats above average...it's no fun to be a fighter in that game if your strength isn't at least 18-something.

If RPG systems didn't put such emphasis on extremes in character attributes I guess this would be less of a problem. I know slagging AD&D is old hat, but having further gradations within a high physical stat is asking for it. And maybe that particular example is a good one for AD&D because the game emphasises combat so much, at least as I remember it. If players feel insecure without characters that look like Dolph Lundgren, well, they should grow up a bit.

Dave Morris, London

Borkelby's Folly is looking good. Since Steve Foster is only going to do one more Eye of All-Seeing Wonder it will soon fall to you to produce the only 'culture game' zine left. The second issue was obviously a lot more accessible than the first because of the introductory material, and 'The Bork' is now developing its own distinctive flavour.

Thanks Dave, though I must say I'm saddened that I'll no longer be able to read the Eye. I hope someone steps in. Jorune now actually has two

zines available in the UK (see the news section) with Sholari having a more professional design but a slower release schedule. Hopefully we'll compliment each other well.

Soren Petersen, Denmark
I enjoyed the issues tremendously. There were a lot of thought provoking articles mixed with lighter bits of reading. I especially liked the article on Thombos. In response to the question in BF1 "What colour is the common thombo?" If you checked out Joe Coleman's WWW page there is a picture of a thombo - it is a hideous shade of purple!

Purple?! Purple?! Oh woe, my world has come apart at the seams. I prefer to think of them as whitish or dappled. Oh well. On balance the thombos piece seems to have been the best received article from issue 2; I'll try to have some lighter moments where possible, so I apologise in advance for the rather 'heavy' nature of this issue. OK, now onto a colossal letter from the irrepressible Bob Dushay, which covers some similar ground to his earlier missive but is nonetheless well worth getting one's teeth stuck into.

Bob Dushay
Lost in Space: I have two content comments. First, I always figured durlig to be horribly bitter, not simply tough and bland. Of course, if durlig were too bitter to eat Jorune cooking would have to feature a lot of sugar to compensate. Tough and bland would be easier to disguise with a variety of sauces. The other is the right way to say 'Iscin'. I always pronounced it 'Eye-sin', and I've seen in described somewhere as 'Iss-sin'. Where did you find the pronunciation?

Iscin as Iss-kin is in the 3rd edition glossary on page 212, and in some 2nd edition material. I used to say Iss-kin as well, and a variety of Joruni things are pronounced differently by different players. Use whatever you feel comfortable with, old habits die hard after all. The durlig comment was a re-edit of "It has the consistency of a leather shoe and tastes like a full ashtray", which I didn't think was particularly elegant. Blame it on writer's block. I thought it was tough because it is hard to swallow, which I admit also relates to the awful taste. Concerning cooking styles the Ardothian method is to make spicy stews or casseroles, mixing meat with diced durlig heart. So much Ardothian food is eaten this way that they mainly use spoons and their bare hands, knives and forks being relatively uncommon. Thivin recipes are changing this somewhat, but remember that the thivin don't eat the food they prepare for everyone else...

Bob Dushay
They Shoot Thombos: I thought this was a neat idea. You tossed out some easy adventure hooks. I always wondered about not naming thombos, it doesn't seem psychologically right. People usually form attachments to animals - at least in all the examples I can think of. I know that Jorunis eat thombo, which complicates things a bit, but I suspect farmers give names to some of their food animals. Besides, one wouldn't eat one's riding thombo, even if they are as common as dirt. Naming one's riding thombo might further separate it from eating thombos. Speaking of being common as dirt, one would need to distinguish one thombo from another. "Father, can I take one of the thombos out to the ridge today?" "Sure son, take the one with the black spots", instead of "Sure, take Griselda?"

I don't want to stereotype anyone but naming animals through affection may be a Western thing, as I have an enduring memory of south Asian marketeers tossing bound dogs onto piles of their fellows, because they were a food source and nothing more. Farmers can have callous attitudes to animals as well, and I doubt you'd name a calf that would later be concussed by a metal hammer before slaughter. Never trust a man that drowns unwanted kittens either. One might eat one's mount, it depends on the level of desperation one was at. The Mongols drank the blood of their mounts while on the campaign trail. In the example you give I'd say the father would be more likely to say "Sure, take one" and leave it at that. The naming of riding beasts is more likely to be a feature of Joruni horse-breeding, these being highly treasured and rare animals. Which brings us on to the next point.

Bob Dushay
Personally I think of cowboys and their horses in the American West. Are Joruni thombos more common than Western horses? Even if they were, how many riding thombos does the average tauther have? The only analogy I can think of for not naming them is whether you name your car. A few of my friends do, and I can see that this would be considered a bit odd. But a car is inanimate, and a thombo is alive...it's a bit trickier with animals. Last point on this: cultural practices will be strong predictors of behaviour. If it is culturally established that thombos don't get names, there will be social pressure not to do it. But how does this practice get started, and can it withstand the presumed human tendency to name useful animals?

Remember that horses exist in their own right as the mount of choice for the wealthy, but Joruni thombocs certainly have an echo of western cattle-drivers. However, the thombo is both riding beast and food staple, so it's not quite the same thing. It's more like western cowboys riding the cows! I'd say thombo must be very common, so maybe they breed quickly, possibly in litters like terran pigs or rabbits; in the Essanja the numbers of wild thombo are a constant nuisance. The point about cars is interesting, as maybe a car-namer may feel a little embarrassed about it. Maybe it's the same with some thombo owners. Culturally the Burdothians have little regard for thombo, but it isn't necessarily so elsewhere. Thantierians were the first

to develop war thombo (yep, I was forgetting that when I said they didn't exist) and may have a different attitude. As an aside, in Mike Tittensor's campaign thombo do have names. They also bark.

Bob Dushay
Generation X: You complained about RuneQuest parties composed entirely of non-humans, with players disdaining the comparatively wimpy humans. Part of this is because non-humans offer all sorts of neat advantages, while humans are boring. Part of it is the excitement of doing something different. The easy solution is to forbid it (we need a term encompassing human, muadra and boccord; 'humanoid' fits best, though it has other connotations).

I would have little problem with an all non-human party of the same racial type or the odd non-human in a party, but there must be some kind of internal consistency in a campaign. If the party of assembled races has no other reason for being together than they are destined for greatness I think it's an excuse for power gaming, or at least the kind of high fantasy that isn't to my personal taste. Owen Smith tells me that he played in a campaign where a woffen PC was played with conviction as a true canine humanoid, and I applaud that kind of approach. Soren Petersen feels that the GURPS method of balancing powerful natural abilities with low skill values (due to total point cost) gets round the problem well. What shall we call human, muadra and boccord? Suggestions anyone?

Bob Dushay
Isn't it elitist to say "No, you can't even try [to play a non-human]. Only experienced players need apply"? If we're going to insist that these aren't humans in furry suits, then there must be background material for Sholari and players to know what they're like. There used to be a 'Playing the Iscin Races' supplement; it ought to be made available again.

If believing that the truly special should be truly rare then, yes, I was being elitist. But bear in mind that I was expressing my personal tastes and aiming the article at the start-up campaign. Most of the material from Playing the Iscin Races is in the sholari's section of the 3rd edition.

Bob Dushay
I believe a skilled Sholari can guide help guide the players into playing Iscin races the way they want. Woffen who don't act like woffen will be shunned by their fellows, and NPCs will constantly point out how unusual they are. The player will either have to wise up or figure out a reason why their woffen is so unusual. This does require a lot of faith on the part of both the player and Sholari to collaborate on world feel and construction.

Bob, are you describing an experienced GM working with experienced players? Otherwise these good ideas could be ignored or wasted.

Bob Dushay
I wouldn't want you to think I never have this problem. Almost every time I start a new RPG and a bunch of people want to roll up characters they all go for non-humans. One idea I have is the PC pool. Each player creates 3 to 4 characters, only one of which may be non-human. When they play an adventure they select one character from the pool, and the others stay at home or do a job, earning some money and gaining a skill. A typical adventure will permit only one non-human character in the party. This gives everybody a chance to create that cool non-human PC, but sharply limits their use.

I like this idea a lot, but there are a couple of problems. First, player-character identification usually suffers when multiple PCs are used. Secondly, the players will spend much longer playing characters in tothis, in fact triple the time (on average) for the humans and even longer for the one non-human.

Bob Dushay
2nd edition provides only one route into the game, as tauther. I realise it may be rare, but what do you do with players who have played Jorune a few times and don't want to do the 'beginning tauther' scenario again? 3rd edition provides a route for players to have some experience and a career under their belt. I don't think the Lekers saw this non-tauther route themselves, since all of their occupation' stories lead to tauther.

Other campaign bases can and perhaps should be used later. I'm currently working on a Thantierian campaign that exists without Drennship, and Jasp has different citizenship rules as well. One could make a case for a klade based campaign, the all non-human party (Temauntro crugar would be interesting), or a political campaign could see new PCs automatically designated Drennit and either embroiled in city politics or parcelled off to the frontier. As I said in the article, some of the occupations and the tauther system clash badly.

Bob Dushay
At least humans get advantages with Earth-tec, which is a lovely carrot to dangle. Even if you think Earth-tec is rare, and the Dharsage isn't going to give out blasters to anyone who asks, a PC has always got to consider the possibility.

Yup, being Drenn gives you the right to request a piece of Earth-tec for a specific purpose, and to return it when that purpose has been served.

Bob Dushay
Regarding specific skill issues...[the] argument over interaction/etiquette bonuses seems on the money: I have no idea why this is in the rules. As for parental skills...I think it's not unreasonable for

people to pick a bit up from their parents...Parental occupations don't grant you the ability to actually perform the skill, but you at least start with the vocabulary and a little knowledge about what the job involves. I think it might be worth one skill level; what are the chances to succeed at any task with one skill level?

Slim. What you may be talking about is some Lore centred around parental occupation. Perhaps the progeny of condrij would have some Military Lore, or War History, and the children of Iscin parents might pick up some interesting snippets. This sounds better, and would hopefully prevent some unlikely couplings based on what skills the player things he can wangle out of the GM. An alternative might be to assign bonus skills based on where the PC comes from, since many Jorunis won't travel beyond their place of birth until they declare tothis. Those raised in Gauss could have a few points in farming and maybe thriddle etiquette, while someone from a suburb of Ardoth could take some City Lore and Crowd Manoeuvre.

Bob Dushay
I think the 4th edition should preserve a way to play non-beginner tauther characters and to play Iscin Races, although it should be made clear that beginners should stick to humanoids...A clearer system of skills should be made, and players must be encouraged to choose non-combat/non-adventure skills to round their characters out. Further, characters developed via the occupational templates should be equalised with those who aren't.

Yes. So essentially we agree that the chapter needs a re-write?

Bob Dushay
The Politics of Burdoth Part II: I think you've missed a couple of possibilities. Communal child rearing does not necessarily mean that the parents are dead. I think the Lekers had a kibbutz model in mind, and it makes some sense if durlig requires so many able bodied adults to perform so much labour.

Klades developed before Gauss discovered the secret of durlig, but I'm splitting hairs. You're right, children could stay while the hunter-gatherers of the first few centuries went off to find food. This is mentioned in CJ:Burdoth somewhere, and I missed it. I also missed a small section from the Sobayid Atlas. Sigh.

Bob Dushay
Kibbutz children are not noticeably different from children raised with their parents, providing there was some parental involvement. As for indoctrination, yes, this will happen, but it isn't 100%: some children will rebel from their upbringing. Besides, it could add some interesting roleplaying angles. Klade background could be as important a motivation as religion.

The psychological make-up of the child will depend on the klade concerned, and whether the children are orphans or among real family. A klade rebel is in a dangerous position because in some areas banishment from the klade could mean death. I don't imagine the Klade Mothers being particularly indulgent. Klades would certainly teach a different version of history than the Iscin academies or the thriddle fadri, and the character's whole world view will be shaped by the klade.

Bob Dushay
Klade members *must* have a means to leave the klade, even if it costs them something. You can't chain people to their organization! I figure most klades will have a way to keep their secrets: not everybody needs to know whatever secrets there are in the manufacturing process...I think we're both assuming that klades do not practice mass production, so more people must know the trade secrets than at today's corporations...Security risks can work in the kitchens, or clean, or do other mundane tasks. Actual klade labour could be an honour to be earned.

I think on Jorune it would be possible to keep someone tied to a klade if the klade elders really couldn't afford to lose them. And look, no-one voluntarily leaves the mafia do they? They don't get away with it at least. Some klades will come close to mass production, though not on a scale we'd recognise. Again, it depends on the klade and the nature of its business. Promotion to journeyman wouldn't be automatic; one could keep a member in the apprentice stage for as long as the master demanded it. These people would be ridiculed I expect, and forced out if need be.

Bob Dushay
I'd still let klade members leave, probably at an earlier age than 20, and those who stay to do the real work must takes oaths of secrecy. Why before age 20? These are essentially agricultural societies, and there is no reason not to consider adulthood as beginning around age 12 or 15. There is less need to keep children in school so long without a complex, technological society, and I would assume Jorune lifespan is somewhat shorter than ours too.

I agree, 20 seems a bit old. I could be wrong, but I think it's possible to marry as young as 12 in Utah; this was because the early settlers needed their women to bear children as early as possible, to ensure the continued survival of the colony, and the law has never been repealed. The Sholari Pack says that human lifespan is about 60 years, and that adulthood usually starts at 16. For other races it's earlier. For example woffen live to 35 and are adult at 10. The later the Iscin Race was created the longer it lives and the more slowly it matures.

Bob Dushay
There's another trick to secrecy. Every klade is vulnerable to the loss of secrets to another klade,

and attempts to lure out and employ former klade members would be endemic unless there was some other protection. Suppose klades have a working agreement not to hire each other's people? It is in everybody's interests to enforce this agreement. A council of klades could arbitrate inter-klade disputes [and] those found in violation will be boycotted. Klades would represent large buyers, and a boycott could be very painful. Needless to say, there would be spying around the edges, but an agreement and boycott would keep the chicanery down. Klades that want to steal secrets would have to able to deny their spies in case they were caught. Here is an adventure hook!

These are all good points, and this kind of agreement might be how the Klade Bay Kim handles things. Certainly a banned klade member would have his patch removed and his name would be dragged through the mud. Those found with counterfeit patches would also be dragged through the dirt - by their hair! However, I think one should think of klades a little less like modern companies and a little more like close-knit tribes.

Bob Dushay
Another feature that klades differ from guilds is the fact that they don't have monopolies. Klades are free to form, and there is obviously competition between klades in some markets. This would preserve some features of a free market, although innovations would still be much less than in our capitalistic system.

Again, it very much depends on the klade. Having the legal right to form a klade and actually doing so successfully are two entirely different things (many go under). Some klades compete with each other while some control industries and/or areas. Get a group of tauther to haul a wagon full of durlig into Khaun Gauss and try to set up a durlig selling klade. They'll get their arses kicked.

Bob Dushay
Politically, I can see that the klades have much to fear from the Drenn system and cronyism from the Dharsage. But, who says only connected individuals get influence from the Dharsage? A well-connected klade may wield much more influence, money, and power than any Drenn could. Klades could provide reliable individuals for positions and jobs. Further, a klade candidate could be more stable than just one individual because if he caused trouble, you could pressure the klade to keep him in line. Besides, appointing a Drenn to a position pleases only one person, while appointing klade members to important jobs can keep the whole klade in line.

More good points here Bob, and I must admit that it threw me a little on first reading. A system of limited patronage to the klades could well be effective, but only in the sense that both parties could them spy on each other and generally poke their noses in. Was it Lyndon Johnson who said that it's better to have someone inside the tent pissing out, than outside the tent pissing in? Yes, I can see the scheming going on now. Mind you, klade sponsored employees wouldn't be let anywhere near the real power, eg. the Ardothian Guard, Vanda's Talons, or the Earth-tec teams.

Bob Dushay
I think you write klades out of the political system too easily. They are integral to the fabric of Burdoth, not incidental economic afterthoughts...or at least, they should be.

No. I do not write them out of the political system, quite the opposite. They may not have the ear of the Dharsage at the moment but that doesn't mean they don't count (the political underclass in any country have a habit of making the six o'clock news). My whole point was that klade influence on Burdothian society is underplayed in the official material.

Bob Dushay
As you point out, there is little reason for klade members to become Drenn, since they already possess many of the advantages. But what if you look at it the other way? The Drenn system provides an opportunity to obtain the advantages normally reserved for the klades. This weakens the klades, but not as much, because it assumes they are better integrated into society to begin with - as they should be.

This is very interesting. In this light Drennship becomes even more democratic and meritocratic, while the klades system is oligarchal and communal. It's a clash of new orthodoxy vs old, in other words. You could have something there Bob.

Bob Dushay
Drennship may be older than you think (the system well predates Dhardrenn and his readings of Plato), but the klades seem to date back to the re-establishment of agriculturally based civilisation, and would have to around longer as an institution.

The concept of Drenn has been around for thousands of years, yes, but the Drenn system as it stands now is a product of the Energy Weapons War and the re-discovery of Earth-tec. It is a way to distribute the wealth of Burdoth's ancestors into the 'right' hands. CJ:Burdoth says as much. One mustn't confuse the term Drenn with 'modern' Drennship; remember that the terms Drenn and Kesht are actually inspired by specialist tec-tons, and for the name of a robot to enter the common language as an honourary title must have taken decades, at least. The only formal title I am aware of in the early centuries is Sage, and that is Thantierian. Klades are, in my opinion, way older as a system of social integration.

Bob Dushay
What if Drenn collect cletch from individuals, [but]

not from klades? This would further reduce Drenn power relative to klade power. If klades give their cletch to the Dharsage directly in a little fealty ceremony, it would serve to remind everybody which klades get favour and which don't.

This is a very attractive idea. The double-edged sword of favour and reprimand would enable the Dharsage to wilfully manipulate the klades, playing one off against the other. A British analogy might the Labour hierarchy dealing with the unions, or the Tories alternately castigating and rewarding their constituency parties. It wouldn't weaken the more powerful Drenn though, because those people would be flanking Dhardrenn as the klades cow-towed. Wonderfully vicious.

Bob Dushay
If the klades are primarily economically based, I can't see them getting too excited about members leaving to become Drenn. On the other hand, if one can seek one's own fortune while remaining a dues-paying member, then why not have more Drenn in one's klade to prove the quality of your members?

The first klade to openly break ranks and side with the Dharsage had better be sure it can survive away from the protection of the Klade Bay, because it is sure to be removed. I think the philosophy of the two systems is pretty much incompatible, like laissez-faire economics and communism. But that's just me.

Bob Dushay
[Concerning] your comment about the military and Drenn; perhaps you are barking up the wrong tree here. Perhaps they are accorded this status because they are serving their nation, not because the Dharsage wants militaristic Drenn.

What's the difference? All the best Drenn are on military missions, and all the best Iscin Drenn work on Earth-tec and Bio-tec - for use by the military. Khodre Dhardrenn is the Commander-in-Chief of the largest fighting force on the planet, almost 200,000 beings for full scale war; that is a massive machine. As a comparison, I calculate the total population of a place like Thantier at no more than 400,000 souls. The Dharsage's concession to public displays of Earth-tec and access to power sources is a hollow gesture. He's tossing the odd bone to the dogs, keeping the plump juicy carcass to himself.

Bob Dushay
Maybe part of the Lekers inspiration for Drennship was Heinlein's 'Starship Troopers' instead of Plato. The problem is that Heinlein's military-based citizenship meant that in order to have a voice in government, you needed to have served. 'Starship Troopers' is a sort of right-wing utopia, but I think Heinlein was trying to make a point about learning responsibility, and about earning the right to vote. Why military service should make one any more politically responsible than any other form of civic education is beyond me.

I'm afraid I've never read Heinlein. I've just bought an SF novel by Walter Jon Williams that explicitly makes use of Plato's vision, in this case the ruling elite being referred to as the Aristoi. I'll see if I can cull it for any ideas about how Drenn might behave. Military governments usually run rampant because they have most of the guns and little accountability. At least Drenn are accountable to Kims and to other Drenn, and Drenn are responsible for the Tauther they endorse.

Bob Dushay
Where the Drenn system falls down is that without democracy, the Drenn have no more voice in government that toth do.

You're partly right. Drenn do have a say in local governance because they serve on Kims, which make and enforce law. They do not have any control over national economic policy or foreign policy, which is solely the province of the Dharsage and his delegates. This why we need a better understanding of how a Kesht rises to become a Lystra and thence to Sage. I imagine it's primarily a matter of political connections.

Bob Dushay
What the *system* gains is people who've proven their dedication and loyalty to the government, and what the *people* gain are economic rights.

True, but does the system produce free-thinking administrators or unquestioning footsoldiers? Something inbetween, or both? What did Burdoth's Drenn think of the secret trade Dhardrenn conducted with the Ramian? At what level does a ruling power set 'loyalty'?

Bob Dushay
I think the next natural question is, what rights do toth have against unreasonable search and seizure, free speech, banishment, official harassment, etc? We may imagine that the klades protect their members from this, but what about non-klade members and non-Drenn?

It's a cruel world isn't it? In a broad sense, the fight for survival isn't over for many of the people on Jorune.

Bob Dushay
Yet another reason why individuals would want to be Drenn, but klade members might not care. The loss of klade power to the Drenn might be smaller than you claim.

I guess the process has only just begun. What happens when everyone is Drenn and there are no more toth left? Who will toil in the fields? Slaves?

That's all folks. Thank you and goodnight.

MAGAZINE REVIEWS
by Matthew Pook

ARCANE MAGAZINE
Future Publishing
Monthly, £3
Pick up a copy of Arcane and you will be assailed by a magazine that is a bright, breezy, well put together affair. The production values are high, and it is obvious that the designers let loose on Arcane have had some fun. Combined with the fact that you can wander into your local newsagents anywhere between here and Nagoya and pick it off the shelf means that Arcane is a joy to behold. Sit and read the contents though, and it is another matter.

The contents themselves are nothing new or innovative. News, articles, scenarios, and reviews are all here, everything as expected, but this is perhaps what the customer wants. The problem lies in the mediocrity of these contents. The news coverage rarely extends beyond a list of forthcoming products; the articles are confined to generic 'how to' subjects and the scenarios are systemless, generic settings.

The real problem is this 'generic' quality. In attempting to present scenarios for all genres the material loses depth. The refusal to accept material for specific games is like publishing an expensive computer magazine and refusing to mount cover discs on the front. Arcane is shooting itself in the foot and cutting itself off from a market it could easily exploit - how quickly are readers going to get bored on a diet of 'how to' articles? One solution would be to present more genre specific material, with rules and statistics for several games.

Arcane shows some promise. It is a pleasant if unexciting read and useful for the reviews and other information, but currently, by attempting to please all of the people all of the time, it is pleasing no-one. A pity, as this is the chance for the traditional role-playing magazine to step out of the closet and legitimize itself.

PYRAMID Issue 15
Steve Jackson Games, £3 (?)
Pyramid is undeniably a house magazine for SJ Games, publishers of Car Wars, GURPS, Toon and (in my humble opinion) the best CCG, Illuminati - I even managed to convert Ray! Whilst Pyramid primarily covers SJG products it also occasionally writes about others as well.

This is a bright, cheerful read that does not take itself too seriously. Use of graphics is bold, with primary colours and a layout far simpler than that of Arcane.

Contents-wise this is an issue devoted to GURPS Time Travel and includes a decent scenario (easily adapted to other time travelling games) and an article on other parallels. The news section is the best of any magazine - Arcane take note - this is news about the industry, not just products. Regular departments include coverage of autoduelling and Ogre. Plus in the back you can find the always funny 'Murphy's Rules' and the excellent 'Bruno' cartoon strip. Both of these poke fun at gaming, Murphy's at rules inconsistencies and Bruno at gaming life.

Pyramid is now my favourite RPG magazine (it used to be the late Challenge) and I would recommend it even if you do not play any of their games. Plus, as in this issue, they sometimes include freebies such as a card or poster. Although they bag the cards they put them in the magazine, which does damage the spine. Pick up a copy just to try it, there is always something useful in each issue.

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SLA Industries is Scottish SF RPG of dark secrets. mean streets, and ultra-violence. It boasts a decent rules system and some very good artwork. In tone and style it is a game that is more punk than cyber and some of the themes dealt with are for the mature gamer only.

To date there are four issues of tHE bIG pICTURE. The format is A4 with each issue running to about 50 pages. The contents are no-nonsense game support: new rules, background, equipment, creatures, and adventures. If you play SLA at all some of the material here should be of use (though all of it is unofficial) and even if you don't, get an issue to sample the flavour of the game.

My only criticisms are that it needs to have more of its own artwork instead of pieces from the SLA rulebook, and it needs to improve the layout by reducing the size of the margins; there is too much white space on each page. Perhaps the inclusion of a letters page would be a nice addition to get some feedback and discussion going. The fanzine could also be a little too expensive, but considering the usefulness of the material this is not too major a complaint.

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